DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 432 136 FL 025 894

AUTHOR	Troudi, Salah, Ed.; Coombe, Christine, Ed.; Riley, Susan, Ed.
TITLE	Unity through Diversity. TESOL Arabia '98 4th International Conference. Conference Proceedings, Vol. III.
INSTITUTION	TESOL Arabia.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	172p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Classroom Techniques; Electronic Mail; *English (Second Language); *Error Correction; Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; *Intercultural Communication; Interpretive Skills; Language Fluency; Letters (Correspondence); Listening Comprehension; Listening Skills; *Literature Appreciation; Oral Language; Second Language Instruction; Student Evaluation; Translation; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS	*Pen Pals

ABSTRACT

Papers from the 1998 international conference on the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) include: "The Future of English: Where Unity and Diversity Meet" (David Crystal); "Maximizing Student Writing and Minimizing Teacher Correction" (Phil Quirke); "How the Camel Got Its Hump: Bringing Literature Back into the ESL Classroom" (Snezha Tsoneva-Mathewson); "Simultaneous Interpretation for Oral Fluency" (Sane M. Yagi); "Penpals to Keypals: Japanese Learners Help Arab Students To Learn English" (Hal Hennigan); "Do Learners Really Benefit from Resource Centers?" (Ian Harrison); "A Learner-Centered Approach to Assessing Listening Comprehension" (Christine Coombe, Jon Kinney); "Strategies and Techniques for Assessing Listening Skills" (Sally Ali); "Computerizing an EST Course" (Christine Cipriani); "A Critical Look at Computer-Aided Language Learning" (Christine M. Canning); "Building Bridges between Trainers and Teachers in the United Arab Emirates" (Hedi Guefrachi and Salah Troudi); "Learner Behavior in Large ESL Classes" (Mohammad Athar Khan); "Producing Culturally Sensitive Materials for Gulf Arab Students" (Lisa Barlow and Jean Floyd); and "ESP in the Arab World" (Karen Asenavage). (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 432 136

TESOL ARABIA '98

4TH International Conference

Unity through Diversity

Conference Proceedings
Vol. III

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
● Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Christine Coombe
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

Edited by Salah Troudi, Christine Coombe & Susan Riley

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FL025894

TESOL Arabia 1998 Conference Proceedings

Table of Contents

Keynote Address

The Future of English: Where Unity and Diversity Meet 1
David Crystal

Teaching Skills

Maximizing Student Writing and Minimizing Teacher Correction 12
Phil Quirke

How the Camel Got Its Hump: Bringing Literature Back into the ESL Classroom 21
Snezha Tsoneva-Mathewson

Simultaneous Interpretation for Oral Fluency 28
Sane M. Yagi

Student Support

Penpals to Keypals: Japanese Learners Help Arab Students to Learn English 46
Hal Hennigan

Do Learners Really Benefit from Resource Centers? 57
Ian Harrison

Assessment

A Learner-centered Approach to Assessing Listening Comprehension 69
Christine Coombe & Jon Kinney

Strategies and Techniques for Assessing Listening Skills 76
Sally Ali

Computer-Assisted Language Learning

Computerizing an EST Course 87
Christine Cipriani

A Critical Look at Computer-Aided Language Learning 107
Christine M. Canning

Teacher Education

Building Bridges Between Trainers and Teachers in the United Arab Emirates 113
Hedi Guefrachi & Salah Troudi

Classroom Culture

Learner Behavior in Large ESL Classes 128
Mohammad Athar Khan

Producing Culturally Sensitive Materials for Gulf Arab Students 147
Lisa Barlow & Jean Floyd

Colloquium Report

ESP in the Arab World 159
Compiled and edited by:
Karen Asenavage

From the Editors

The third volume of the TESOL Arabia Conference Proceedings presents a collection of papers delivered at the 1998 annual conference. The papers address a variety of issues of direct relevance to the EF/SL teacher and learner in elementary, secondary and tertiary education.

We feel that this volume offers an excellent representation of the comprehensive range of presentation content and style which make the TESOL Arabia Conference so valuable for its participants.

This volume is well into its third year and the editors would like to encourage more conference presenters to submit their professional work for publication. This refereed publication represents an excellent opportunity and venue for authors who want to share their expertise with other ELT professionals in the region.

The editors would like to thank the authors for their careful adherence to the publication guidelines and for their professional effort. Thanks are also extended to the TESOL Arabia Executive Council for their financial assistance and to Janet Angustia for her careful typing and formatting of this manuscript.

Salah Troudi
Christine Coombe
Susan Riley

Keynote Address
The Future of English: Where Unity and Diversity Meet
DAVID CRYSTAL

An anecdotal introduction

Some time ago, I was attending an international seminar at a European university. Around the table were representatives of some 20 countries. There were two people from the UK, two from the US, and one from Australia, with the others all from countries where English was either a second (official) language or a foreign language. The lingua franca of the meeting was English, and everyone seemed to be using the language competently - even the native speakers.

We were well into the discussion period following a paper which had generated a lively buzz of comment and counter-comment. Someone then made a telling remark. There was a silence round the table, which was broken by one of the US delegates observing: 'That came from out in left field'. There was another silence, and I could see some of the delegates turning to their neighbors in a surreptitious way, as one does when one does not understand what on earth is going on, and wants to check that one is not alone. But they were not pondering the telling remark. They were asking each other what 'from out in left field' meant. My neighbour asked me: as a native speaker, he felt confident I would know. I did not know. Baseball at that time was a closed book to me - and still is, very largely.

One of the braver of the delegates spoke up: 'out where?', he asked. It took the US delegate by surprise, as plainly he'd never had that idiom questioned before; but he managed to explain that it was a figure of speech from baseball, a ball coming from an unusual direction, and what he had meant was that the remark was surprising, unexpected. There were nods of relief from around the table. Then one of the UK delegates chipped in: 'You played that with a straight bat', he said. 'Huh?', said the American. 'Oh, I say, that's not cricket', I added, parodically. 'Isn't it?', asked a delegate from Asia, now totally confused. The next few minutes of the meeting were somewhat chaotic. The original theme was quite forgotten, as people energetically debated the meaning of cricket and baseball idioms with their neighbours. Those who could added their own local version of how they said things like that in their - part of the world - the sports metaphors they lived by. Eventually, the chairman called everyone back to order, and the discussion of the paper continued. But my attention was blown, and I spent the remainder of the session listening not to what delegates were saying, but to how they were saying it.

What was immediately noticeable was that the native speakers seemed to become much less colloquial. In particular, I didn't sense any further use of national idioms. Indeed, the speakers seemed to be going out of their way to avoid them. I made a small contribution towards the end, and I remember thinking while I was doing it - 'don't use any cricket terms'. Afterwards, in the bar, others admitted to doing the same. My British colleague said he'd consciously avoided using the word fortnight replacing it by two weeks, as he'd 'had trouble with that one before'. And, as the evening wore on, people began apologizing facetiously when they noticed themselves using a national idiom, or when somebody else used one. It became something of a game - the kind that linguists love to play.

There was one nice moment, I recall, when the US, UK, and Australian delegates were all reduced to incoherence when they found that they had disbarred themselves from using any of their natural expressions for 'the safe walking route at the side of a road' -pavement (UK), sidewalk (US), and footpath (Australian). In the absence of a regionally neutral term, all they were left with was circumlocution (such as the one just given). I also remember 'engine-cover' being proposed as a neutral term for bonnet and hood. Somebody made a joke about the need for a linguistic United Nations. The rest is a blur.

An interpretation

In the cold, sober light of later days, it seemed to me that what I had observed taking place at that seminar was of some significance, as far as the future of the English language was concerned - and probably was taking place regularly at international gatherings all over the world. I was seeing a new kind of English being born - a variety which was intended for international spoken usage, and which was thus avoiding the idiosyncrasies associated with national varieties of expression. Such a variety is not yet with us, as a living entity with standardized usage, but it still needs a name. Let us call it Emerging World Standard Spoken English (EWSSE).

Although EWSSE does not exist as an institutionalized variety, its written equivalent does - traditionally called Standard English, but in the present context perhaps better called World Standard Printed English (WSPE). It is sometimes forgotten that what we call Standard English is essentially a written - and primarily a printed - variety of language, and moreover one which has developed as a standard precisely because it guarantees mutual written intelligibility, first within individual countries, then internationally. It isn't difficult to demonstrate the reality of WSPE.

In preparing The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language (1995), I chose one day - 6 July 1993 - and collected as many English-language newspapers as I could get hold of from around the world. Friends, people from the CUP offices, academic contacts, and others sent them in to me - an enormous pile of newsprint. They came from first language countries, such as the UK, USA, and Australia; second-language countries, where the language has some special status, such as India and Singapore; and countries where English has no such status, being taught solely as a foreign language, such as Greece (*The Athens News*), Egypt (*Al Ahram*), the Czech Republic (*The Prague Post*), Korea (*The Korea Herald*), and Japan (*The Daily Yomiun*). I then went through these papers looking for differences in vocabulary, grammar and anything else which might be considered linguistic. There was next to nothing. Cultural influences were obvious, of course - local names and personalities, more space devoted to local sports and politics - but linguistically there was little variation. The range of grammatical constructions was virtually identical - not surprising, perhaps, when we realise that, in the whole of the largest reference grammar we have for English (Quirk, et al's *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*), reference to the index (under American English, British English, etc.) brings to light only a handful of constructions which display regional variation. There was much more variation in vocabulary, of course, but even here the overall impression was one of uniformity and standardization- and the places where this uniformity was missing were restricted to certain sections of the newspaper, such as cartoon captions and sports reports. Only in spelling and punctuation were there noticeable national differences, reflecting British vs American points of origin - and it is a moot point nowadays whether these can any longer be called 'national', given the way these two standards have come to be used erratically throughout the world. They even appear in 'mixed' versions in some countries, such as in Canada and Australia (where there may be variation even between provinces/states) and in Britain (where the influence of US spelling is widespread). On the whole, therefore, WSPE is the same wherever it is encountered. This is what one would expect. That is what a standard is for. It would not be able to fulfill its role as an international (written) lingua franca if it were riddled with regional idiosyncrasies.

What the seminar example seems to be suggesting is the eventual emergence of a spoken equivalent to WSPE, in international settings where educated people come to talk to each other and choose to use English as their (spoken) lingua franca. It is not surprising that such a variety should be growing, given the way in which English has developed as a genuine global language in the second half of the 20th ce(Crystal, 1997). The linguistic characteristics of this variety are currently unclear: but, a priori, if it is to succeed, there are certain features which it must have, and which we would expect to see emerging early on in its development, in the form of uncertainties about usage. Chief amongst these would be intelligibility difficulties over national regional norms (as in the case of the baseball idiom) as people using English from one part of the world come into contact with those using English from another. Because most regional dialect differentiation is a matter of vocabulary, this is the domain where usage problems will be most immediately and noticeably encountered. (I use vocabulary to include idioms, of course - and use as my chief example of translatlantic difficulty the problem I faced when, on my first visit to the USA, and arriving in a hotel restaurant for breakfast one morning, I asked for 'eggs'. I was asked: 'How do you like your eggs?'. Unused to this question, I stammered 'cooked'. The unflappable response, which listed 'once over easy', 'sunny side up', and several other alternatives, brought me into contact with the lexicon of an unfamiliar culinary world. The problem remains: when last in New York, the terminology, as well as the syntax, of sandwich construction, is still beyond me.) Next, in this EWSSE, will be differences in grammar - as I have said, insofar as national variations exist at all. And the domain of pronunciation will provide a third kind of close encounter - already observable in the 'midatlantic' accents which emerge when people speaking different regional Englishes accommodate to each other, or in the unique amalgam of ex-European accents which currently characterizes the corridors of power in the European Union.

This is an exciting time, for linguist observers of the world scene. No language has ever had such global exposure as English has, so there are no precedents for what is currently taking place. We do not know what happens to a language when it becomes a genuinely world language - recognized as a prestige language in all countries, and used in aggregate by more people (especially as a second or foreign language) for more purposes than any other language. Let us pause for a moment, and reflect on the statistics (bearing in mind that statistics on world language use are notoriously approximate). The number of people who use English as a first language must currently be about 400 million - more accurately, between 350 and 450 million. The chief reason for the uncertainty is whether creole and pidgin varieties derived from English should be included in the total: if you consider these to be 'varieties of English' then you will include them, and you will move towards the higher total;

contrariwise, if you consider that they are, in some sense, separate languages now, you may wish to exclude them, and you will then move towards the lower total. It should also be noted, in passing that, of these 400 million people, about 230 million of them live in the USA - well over half. Fifty-six million live in the UK - very much a minority dialect of world English now!

But the issue of British versus American English begins to seem very dated when we consider the next total - the number of people who speak English as a second or foreign language. Here the figures are even more difficult to be sure about, for the obvious reason that fluency is a continuum, and we have to decide how much competence in English somebody needs before being allowed to join the community of world English users. A criterion of native-speaker-like fluency would clearly produce a relatively small figure; including every beginner would produce a relatively large one - such as the British Council estimate that, at the turn of the century, about a billion (thousand million) people will be learning English, somewhere or other. That figure cannot be ignored - the people are, after all, learning English, as opposed to some other language - but plainly it needs to be interpreted cautiously. The commonest estimates I see these days hover around 300-400 million for second-language users, and around 500-700 million for foreign language users. That makes 1200-1500 as a grand total, which is about a quarter of the world's population, and far larger than the cumulative total for (the eight languages which comprise) Chinese.

This is not the place to review the reasons for the remarkable spread of English. I have gone into these in my *English as a Global Language* (1997), so there is no point in repeating them here - other than to remind you that we are talking about different forms of power. Languages spread, not because of any intrinsic structural characteristics - inherent notions of logic or beauty or simplicity, or the like - but for one reason only: the power of the people who use them. You can see this at the very outset of the global English period. At the end of the 16th century, English people travelling abroad would reflect on which languages would be of most use to them. Latin, Italian, French, and Dutch - were among those listed - but English, never- 'Our English tongue', says Richard Mulcaster in 1582,'is of small reach - it stretcheth no further than this island of ours - nay, not there over all'. There must have been only about 5 million speakers of English then. And there was no reason for anybody abroad to pay much attention to what was written in English. But, ironically, Mulcaster made his remarks in the same year that an aspiring actor married a Stratford girl called Anne Hathaway, and just before Raleigh sent the first of his three expeditions to America (1584). Within a generation, the status of English would have fundamentally changed. Within a century, the British Empire would be a reality. And in addition to this military, colonial application of power we then find three other applications: in the 18th century, a technological, industrial power (the Industrial Revolution, where we must remember that over half of the pioneers were working through the medium of English): in the 19th century, economic power, with the USA eventually taking over the world lead from Britain; and finally, cultural power, with the USA again predominant in the present century, as is evident in such domains as advertising, broadcasting, and the Internet.

That, in a very tiny nutshell, is the history of English as a world language. It suggests that the prospects for English, and its relationships with other languages, as David Graddol has pointed out in his British Council survey, *The Future of English* (1998), are totally bound up with world economic and demographic trends. And one of these trends is already very significant. Analysis of the population growth of the countries involved indicates that (on

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

average) countries where English is used as a second language are growing at approximately three times the rate of those countries where it is a mother-tongue. For example, even though only 3 or 4% of the people of India are fluent in English, with a population fast approaching a billion and a growth rate of 1.9% per annum, there will soon be more people speaking English in India than there are in England. And certainly, the world total for second-language speakers will soon pass - it may have done so already - the world total for first-language speakers. What this means, in short, is that English has gone well beyond the stage where it can be said to be 'owned' by anyone - a fact which many people (especially those in the UK), recalling their national past, find unpalatable. Even 230 million Americans comprise only about a sixth of the world language total.

No language has ever been spoken by so many people in so many countries before. No language of such sociohistorical prestige has ever had its mother-tongue speakers so significantly outnumbered. There are therefore no precedents to guide us about the likely outcomes. And there are precious few facts. We have to be on our toes - and that means all of us, academics, consultants, journalists, teachers...We are at a crucial observational stage in English linguistic history, and all we can do to cope with the riot of linguistic speculation is fall back on well-established theory to guide our practice. Speculation? You will have seen the headlines. Will the English language fragment into mutually unintelligible languages, as it spreads around the world? Will English kill off other languages? Will our teaching models survive?

To begin answering these questions it is essential to adopt an appropriately general perspective. And chief among these is the need to broaden our views about the functions of language. If this conference is about unity and diversity, then at some point it cannot avoid considering this basic question of language function. What is language for? The conventional answer talks about people 'communicating' with each other in the sense that one person sends a meaning, a message, a thought, an idea, and another person receives it. The whole point of language, it is assumed, is to foster the transmission of knowledge, however this is defined - as concepts, facts, opinions, emotions, or any other kind of 'information'. Why use language? - for 'the expression of thought', says the *Oxford English Dictionary* - for 'expressing thought or feeling', says Chambers: for 'communicating ideas or feelings', says the *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*. Let us call this the referential function of language.

But such a view of language is unacceptably narrow. The referential view cannot handle so much of what goes on in real life. It ignores, for example, the vast world of language play - a domain where we bend and break the rules of the language for fun (see further Crystal, 1998). Here is a fragment of a conversation transcribed a little while ago. Janet and John are husband and wife, as are Peter and Jane. The two couples are friends, and they live near to each other. They have got together for an evening, and are talking about the way their respective cats met in the middle of the road separating their two houses.

Janet: ...And so there was a sort of confrontation between Crumble and Splash -

Jane: Catfrontation, you mean. (Laughs.)

Janet: Well, alright, catfrontation, if you insist - and they stood by the -

Peter: Near cat-astrophe, if you ask me. (Groans all round.)

Janet: I wasn't asking you, Peter!

Peter: Sorry, I didn't mean to be categorical. (More groans all round.)

Jane: This sounds like it's becoming a catalogue of disasters. (Peals of laughter.)

Peter: I don't think John approves of all this jocularity, when Janet's trying to tell us a perfectly serious story.

Jane: You know what John's being, though, don't you.

Janet: What?

Jane: A catalyst! (More laughter all round.)

Peter: I thought that was what happened to moggies when they'd drunk too much. (Further groans.)

Janet: Oh, that's Christmas-cracker standard.

Peter: Of course, you know what Splash would get if he stayed outside for too long?

Jane: What?

Susan: Catarrh. (More laughter all round)

Janet: Anyway, to get back to the point ...

John: Yes, get on with your catechism, Janet. (Mock cheers.)

It's easy to see what is happening. Jane's inspired piece of ingenious word-formation, catfrontation, has sparked off a word-play mood. Peter and Jane try to outdo each other by finding words beginning with cat- which can be plausibly related in meaning to the conversational topic. Eventually John joins in, abandoning his mock-reluctance - and actually adds catapult to the list a few minutes further on.

Judged by any professional standards of comedy, the efforts of these four conversationalists range from the pathetic to the brilliant. But that is not the point. The real point is that all are having an excellent time. They do not mind that the conversation has been temporarily disrupted, and are happy to keep the main story in suspension. They applaud each other's cleverness, using groans and laughter, and nothing else seems to matter. The humour bounces back and forth between them, in an almost competitive spirit - which is why this kind of behaviour has sometimes been called 'ping-pong punning'.

It is difficult to see how ping-pong punning can possibly fit in with the view that the purpose of language is to communicate ideas. For what new knowledge is being transmitted between the participants, as they bounce jokes off each other? None. What have they learned, at the end of the sequence, that they did not know before? Nothing. There seems to be a tacit agreement that none of their language is to be taken at its face value, while the exchange is in progress - that no sentence is to be interpreted as containing any real information. The feline situation is not truly a catastrophic one. John is not really being a catalyst. Nor would Splash really develop catarrh. The rules governing literal discourse have been suspended, while everyone delights in verbally showing off.

The ludic function of language is illustrated here just from a conversation, though it can also be found in many other contexts - word games, such as Scrabble and crosswords, advertising slogans, punning newspaper headlines (a standard source of EFL materials, of course), and (last but hardly least) the linguistically creative world of literature, where rules are being bent and broken all the time. Language play is a good example of a function which has been much neglected in mainstream linguistics - or, for that matter, in such applied areas as the teaching of reading in schools. I'm glad to see a trend to incorporate ludic elements into foreign language teaching materials, in recent years - though even there, I sense a certain reluctance to enter fully into the spirit of it.

The traditional focus on the referential function of language has led to a neglect of other functions, too - and here I return to the world English theme. The referential function is certainly important, at a global level, because it underpins the notion of standard. A standard guarantees mutual intelligibility. That is what it is for. But there is another function which, although it is always with us, has brought into the centre of our attention by the issue of world English, and that is identity. Indeed, on any scale of relative importance, where importance is judged in terms of what people are prepared to do, identity emerges as light-years ahead of intelligibility. People do not usually go on hunger-strike, take part in protest marches, invade parliamentary buildings, and kill themselves for intelligibility - though there is the occasional famous exception, such as the public shredding of government forms in Parliament Square by the Plain English Campaign in 1979. But people do all of these things for identity - to preserve their language, whether collectively or individually in the face of a perceived threat. The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, formulated at Barcelona in 1996, and currently the focus of a great deal of international attention, is devoted to this matter. And a concern for identity has fuelled many of the trends we notice in the use of English, as it increases its global presence.

Chief among these trends is the growth of new national standards - the so-called 'new Englishes' in such countries as India, Singapore, and Ghana - whose role is to preserve national identity. These have now been well discussed (MacArthur,1998), though still only superficially described, and I will not go into them here, other than to draw attention to the recency with which this phenomenon has emerged. Recall that in 1956 there were only 80 members of the United Nations; now there are over 180. Most of the new members are the result of the independence movements which date from the 1960s. With new found independence comes an urge to manifest your identity in the eyes of the world. And the most convenient way of manifesting this identity is through the medium of the language you use.

Many of the new countries, such as Ghana and Nigeria, found that they had no alternative but to continue using English - the alternative was to make an impossible choice between the many competing locethnic languages - over 400, in the case of Nigeria. However, we can also appreciate their view that to continue with English would be, in the eyes of many, an unacceptable link with the colonial past. How could this dilemma be resolved? The answer was to continue with English, but to shape it to meet their own ends - adding local vocabulary, focussing on local cultural variations, developing fresh standards of pronunciation. It is not difficult to quickly accumulate several thousand local lexical items, in countries which have a wide range of local fauna and flora, diverse ethnic customs, and regular daily contacts with different languages. And I mean 'accumulate' - several regional dictionary projects were launched soon after independence, as part of this expression of new identity. And the emerging literatures of the Commonwealth countries - the novels from various parts of West Africa, the poetry from the countries of the Caribbean - illustrate how quickly new identities can emerge. The term 'New Englishes' reflects these identities.

The new varieties attracted enormous debate in the 1970s and 1980s. The question of which kind of English to write in or even, whether to write in English at all - was a real problem facing many creative authors. But these days, with the first generation of post-colonial development behind us, the issues are settling down, and repeatedly one encounters the view nowadays that it is not a necessary either/or choice. It is not a matter of having to choose between intelligibility and identity but of allowing the coexistence of both intelligibility and identity. To be a happy language-using individual (or community), both dimensions are essential: we need to be able to talk to others outside our community, and to understand them, if we wish to trade with them, and have access to their goods and services; at the same time, we need to be able to demonstrate, through our speech, that we are not the same as them. There is no inevitable conflict, because the two functions of language respond to different needs. There is unity and diversity at the same time. But the demands do appear to be contradictory, and when people do see them as contradictory, or are not sensitive to the needs of all the linguistic communities with whom they live, there is always trouble, in the form of acrimonious debates about standards in the school curriculum or in society at large, widespread anxiety about the survival of a local language or dialect, and - in the extreme cases - language marches, rioting, and deaths. Wise language planning can avoid the contradiction, and reduce the tension - even (though this is unfortunately rare) eliminate it: it is possible to have your linguistic cake and eat it, as can be seen in such countries as Switzerland and Finland, where policies of sensitive multilingualism recognize the strengths of individual languages, and the different purposes for which they are used, and real support is given to developing bilingual ways of life. More appropriate, in the present discussion, would be to talk about bidialectism - and this too can be sensitively promoted. However, positive approaches are often not easy to implement: they are bedevilled by complications arising out of individual national histories, whereby the political aspirations of minority groups come into conflict with national government policies. A bilingual or bidialectal policy can also be extremely expensive. But it is the only way in which the otherwise competing demands of intelligibility and identity can be reconciled.

These are important issues for anyone interested in language, at any age, to address; and certainly any curriculum should give its students the opportunity to do so. The issues are important because everyone is affected by them. No-one can avoid being part of the current of linguistic change or - to extend the metaphor - can avoid bathing in the sea of linguistic variety. Nor can anyone escape the variations of attitude which people express in reaction to what is happening, as some try to swim against the current, while others blithely let it carry them along. Everyone, at some time or other will have their usage challenged by someone else, whether it be a parent, teacher, peer-group member, neighbour, editor, colleague, or boss. The contexts might be local, national, or global. To cope with such challenges, or to respond to them coherently, people need confidence - and confidence comes from knowledge, an awareness of what is happening to language and what the issues are. A linguistically informed curriculum, whether in mother-tongue teaching or in foreign-language teaching, can provide the foundation on which such confidence can be built, because it gives people insight into principles which can make sense of the multifaceted and potentially confusing linguistic world which surrounds them.

And so, to take one of the questions regularly asked: will the English-language fragment? The history of language suggests that fragmentation is a regular phenomenon (as in the well-known case of Latin): but the history of language is no longer a guide. Today, we live in the proverbial global village, where we have immediate access to other languages, and to varieties of English, in ways that have come to be available but recently; and this is having a radical effect. A British Council colleague told me recently that he had just come back from India where he had seen a group of people in an out-of-the-way village clustering around a television set, where they were hearing CNN News beamed down via satellite. None of these people, he felt, would have heard any kind of English before – at least, not in any regular way - other than the Indian variety of English used by their school-teacher. With a whole range of fresh auditory models becoming routinely available, it is easy to see how the type of English spoken in India could move in fresh directions. And satellite communication being, by definition, global, it is easy to see how a system of natural checks and balances - also well-attested in the history of language - could emerge in the case of world English. The pull imposed by the need for identity, which has been making Indian English increasingly dissimilar from British English, will be balanced by a pull imposed by the need for intelligibility on a world scale, which will make Indian English increasingly similar - to CNN, at least! And this could happen anywhere.

And how does balance manifest itself in community terms? This is where the notion of multilingualism comes into play. It is an axiom of contemporary sociolinguistically informed language planning that the only way to reduce the tension between language communities is to recognize the importance of linguistic diversity, and place multilingualism at the centre of language policy and planning. In the case of English, as I have said, we should be talking about multidialectism rather than multilingualism, but the issue is the same: joint respect for the two principles, intelligibility and identity. And this is what my baseball anecdote at the beginning of my paper was intended to illustrate. The EWSSE scenario suggests that, during the 21st century people with an international presence who speak English as a first language will find themselves adding a third variety to their repertoire. Many people already have two. They speak a national formal variety, or dialect ('I speak British/US/Australian... English') as well as an intra-national informal variety, which is often regionally biased ('I speak the colloquial English of Liverpool, Glasgow Boston, New Orleans...'). Those who are bidialectal in this way slip into each of these varieties without thinking about it. In future, the baseball example suggests, they will become tridialectal, with the international variety offering them a further option of an English in which national usages have been replaced by regionally neutral forms - to be used, of course, only when circumstances are right.

I feel it happening to me. At home, I speak my personal brand of Welsh/Liverpudlian-influenced English. At a national conference I dropthe local Welsh/Liverpudlian expressions, and adopt an accent more in the direction of RP. And at an international conference, such as this one, I go a stage further, and drop as many of my national Britishisms as I can - especially the colloquialisms - which I sense might pose problems of intelligibility. Even the accent changes. This is not 'foreigner-speak' - a conscious simplifying or talking-down. It is a new variety, as complex as any other variety I know, but geared towards a different audience. And, as I said at the outset, it doesn't exist in stable form as yet. I am conscious of it growing within me. But it takes a long time for a new set of norms to become internalised. It requires feedback from others, of the conversational kind, and very little of this has yet happened to me- I have probably used several Britishisms in this talk today without intending to. But I do know that the variety in which I have given this talk is different from the corresponding variety I would be using were I giving it in Birmingham or Manchester I sense the constraints.

What becomes especially interesting, of course, is to speculate about the way this EWSSE will develop. It will undoubtedly adopt fresh forms of lexical expression, as national regionalisms come to be avoided. Some of these will come from the nature of the interactive context itself: I am told that there is a growing distinctive technical and slang vocabulary in English in the corridors of the European Community these days - words and phrases which only the diplomats and bureaucrats use when going about their business. Huge numbers of terms beginning with the prefix Euro-, for example. In that microcosm, we see the members of an international, multilingual community changing a lingua

That is enough - franca to suit themselves. And because it is a microcosm, with relatively small numbers of people involved, the changes are taking place quite quickly. It could take a hundred years for it to happen on a world scale, though once the Internet comes to be voice-interactive (within the next 25 years, I suspect) that could change. Even pronunciation is affected. I have heard a conversation where the linguistic accommodation between the multinational participants was so great that everyone adopted a range of phonological modifications - such as articulating final consonants carefully, and speaking in a more syllable-timed way. Even - and this is the point - the British participants picked up these speaking patterns. I have heard myself do it many times - slipping into the syllable-timed speech being used by everyone else. Indeed, given that varieties of syllable-timed speech is the norm for most languages in the world, and has emerged through language contact in so many varieties of second-language English (such as the Caribbean, South Africa, India), it may well be that WSSE, at the end of the next century, will be a syllable-timed variety of English. That would certainly save us all a great deal of time worrying about patterns of word stress!

That is enough speculation, for one talk. I hope the principles which fuelled the speculation are clear. There is always a tension between unity and diversity, and the only way it can be resolved is by understanding the processes which foster both. A developed concept of language function is critical, and within this, an appreciation of the complementary notions of intelligibility and identity. If our job, as English language teachers, is to do the best for our pupils, to put them in the most powerful position possible to cope with the demands of an increasingly complex world, then - the more we can familiarise them with varieties of the language, the better. And the more we can prepare them for the realities of tridialectal English-language use in the 21st , century, the better. It isn't going to make our job any easier, of course. But then, if you'd all wanted an easy job, you wouldn't be here.

References

Crystal, David. (1995). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge: CUP

----(1997). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: CUP.

----(1998). *Language Play*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Graddol, David. (1998). *The Future of English London*: The British Council.

MacArthur, Tom. (1998). *The English Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Quirk, Randolph, Greenbaum, Sidney, Leech, Geoffrey, and Svartvik, Jan. (1985). A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language. London: Longman.

Maximizing student writing and minimizing teacher correction

PHIL QUIRKE
Higher Colleges of Technology

1. Introduction

This paper is a practical description of how I have run student journals successfully over the past two years. It focuses in particular on one class I have been teaching for the past ten months, because it is a reflection of all I have learnt about making journals work with the minimum amount of work for the teacher.

When teachers are asked if they have used journals, the majority reply that they would love to as they clearly see their benefit to the students, but they simply do not have the time. This paper addresses this notion in particular - that student journals take an inordinate amount of teacher time - and attempts to show that it is incorrect.

My own use of journals began on a very ad-hoc basis some six or seven years ago, based on the belief that I was not focussing on written fluency in my classes. All the students' written work seemed to be teacher generated and aimed at accuracy with correction focusing on the language rather than the message. I still believe today that the majority of writing classes taught in EFL tend to put the idea of fluency very much on the back burner. The use of student journals is my solution to giving students regular authentic practice in fluent writing.

The paper attempts to follow the order of the presentation given at TESOL Arabia '98, starting with setting the journal up and taking it through to its conclusion if there indeed is one.

2. Setting the scene

In order for the journals to work well with any class it is imperative that the scene is set well, and that the students understand the ground rules for the journal. These can be listed in just four main points:

- *the importance of free writing*. Students need to understand that these journals will not be corrected like all other written work. I actually make no language corrections in the journals at all, unless specifically asked by the student as part of an entry.

- *the fact that the journal is the student's own*. They are the ones who decide what and how much to write. I begin each journal with the same series of questions (see next section), but the students are permitted to write anything they like and are under no obligation to answer any question if they don't want to. These first entries are done in class on paper, but thereafter I insist that each student buy their own notebook for the journal. This seems to give them an increased sense of ownership and those I have run without separate notebooks have not worked as well. I always stress that since it is their own I am honoured to be able to read it and it is strictly confidential. I never show a journal to a third person. All student quotes in this paper are given with the individual permission of the student concerned.

- *the language of my responses and how I write them*. The students need to understand that the journal is like a written conversation in many cases, and that I do not grade my language in any way. It is up to them to try to understand my responses. If they don't, they can always ask for clarification in the next entry. It is this natural method of response which distinguishes the way I run journals from most examples I have seen. It also means that the journals take little time from the teacher's busy schedule. Each journal takes only minimally longer to respond to than it does to read.

- *writing is a pleasure which is sadly lost in many EFL writing classes around the world*. The journal is an attempt to bring the fun back into writing through genuine communication betwee teacher and student.

3. The First Questions – Getting Started

The first entry is completed in class and takes about half an hour together with setting the scene. It is the only class time I give over to the journals although I know other teachers allow a reading slot for students to go through the responses. I do not do this as it assumes that all the journals are given in and handed back on the same day. I find this impossible to cope with and give each of my students a hand in day for their journal. If they miss it, they must wait until the following week, and I would expect an apology in the next entry as well. In this way I only receive four journals a day from a class of twenty students and these would take me around half an hour to correct, maybe less depending on the size of the entries.

After setting the scene I give the students the following questions and tell them they have twenty minutes to write their answers. They should concentrate on what they want to say rather than the grammar and spelling. The message is paramount. The journals are about the fluency of the student's writing as well as the clarity of expression and use of vocabulary. These last three sentences I often include in the introduction to the questions on the worksheet.

I have tried starting the journal without questions, with fewer questions and with more questions than those below. However, I have discovered that the eight below seem to get the best response:

1. How often do you write in English?
2. What do you like writing?
3. What do you find most difficult when you are writing?
4. What would you like to work on in this journal?
5. What topics do you find most interesting?
6. What do you think makes a good writer?
7. How do you think I can help you become a better writer?
8. What are your personal aims for this course?

Students write exactly what they want to. I don't encourage them to write more or less. I have had some responses to the second question stretch to two pages whilst others have written simply; "Not a lot."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

It is how I respond in the journal which will encourage students to write more, and I have to give them the feeling from the first entry that it is their journal. Therefore, even if they have only written eight monosyllabic responses, I still collect it with a smile and a thank you.

This first and only class devoted to the journals finishes with a discussion and decision on which day each student will hand their journal in.

4. Students Responses – The First Tentative Steps

In this section of the paper I will hand you over to the students and simply give you a randomly selected list of responses so that you can have an idea of the variety generated by the eight questions.

1. **How often do you write in English?**
   - *Almost every day since I write my diary in English.*
   - *I sometimes write in English.*
   - *Actually I write twice a month when I'm on vacations, while when I'm at the college I could write every day or 3 times a week.*

2. **What do you like writing?**
   - *I write letters to friends..*
   - *Stories, poems but I really don't like writing 'business' stuff unless I really have to (like in college)..*
   - *I like writing essays for example.*

3. **What do you find most difficult when you are writing?**
   - *Sometimes I find it difficult to come up with ideas.*
   - *The spelling and conjunction.*
   - *Accurate.*

4. **What would you like to work on in this journal?**
   - *Since I really don't have a clear idea about journals, I have no 'serious' comment except what I liked in the way you explained it: "it's not a pencil sketch, it's more an oil painting. So I guess you'd expect sure Picaso art from our class. I like Van Gough style more so I guess you'd expect 'weird' stuff from me.*
   - *Anything which helps improve my writing skills.*
   - *Accurate, spelling and grammar.*

5. **What topics do you find most interesting?**
   - *Controversial topics, you know, the 'in stuff'.*
   - *I like writing about social topics as an example.*
   - *Civilisations, environment, nature, history, pollution, social stories, adventures, majical stories, archeology, politic, poems, health, arabic literature, science, religious themes, psychological subjects.*

6. **What do you think makes a good writer?**
    - *I think that practicing writing makes a good writer.*
    - *One that express oneself truly and honestly without regard to what should or shouldn't be talked or written about.*
    - *I think reading and writing make a good writer.*

7. **How do you think I can help you become a better writer?**
    - *Encourage me to be myself.*
    - *Don't critic me because I had bad experience with teachers on this.*
    - *Tell me what I should and shouldn't do while writing.*

5. Teachers Replies – Encouraging Involvement

When replying I simply read and put a number by any point I wish to comment on. I then cross reference by putting the same numbers at the end of the student entry and completing my comments. I spend NO time dwelling on what to write. If it doesn't come to me immediately, it is not something I would want to say. I respond quickly and naturally and as much as possible in a way I would in conversation. The importance of this cannot be stressed enough. The student should be writing to me the person, not to their teacher looking for errors and wanting to correct. This is much easier said than done and takes some getting used to. However, it is worth the effort as correction time drops to a minimum and the students in turn respond more naturally and enthusiastically.

My replies are to the content of the student's message. I don't correct the language. If I don't understand something, I just say so and ask the student to clarify what they mean. Occasionally, I might use "hidden correction" whereby I rewrite what the student has written in my response but correctly. I draw no attention to it and am continually surprised how students have picked up on it and started spelling the word correctly or using that particular form appropriately. Occasionally students have asked me to correct their work, and since it is their journal I have not refused. In my reply I stress that this is not what the journal is about, but if they really want to we could work on the language. I then suggest strategies we can use which could be from focusing on subject verb agreement to rewriting spelling mistakes to looking at what has been omitted (e.g. the auxiliary verb). In every case I never give the student the answer, but ask them to come up with the correction under my guidance through, for example, correction symbols. However, of the 21 journals I am running at the moment only two students are doing this, and that is a fairly consistent average. The majority revel in their new found writing freedom as the final section below shows.

The first time I gave this presentation I found this difficult to explain. I explained this to my students, and a couple agreed to type up a selection of responses on a particular theme over a number of weeks. I think the example below demonstrates how I write my responses and how the students in turn respond much more vividly than any description or explanation I could give.

First Entry:

4. *What do you like writing?*

Manly I like to write stories. Also, I like anther intrusting topic like art, photography (*4*), sport.

Second Entry:

4. *Do you enjoy photography?*
Have you got your own camera? What kind is it?
What do you like photographing?

Photography is another hobby that I have. Before I toke the photography course and that was two years ago photography was for me just a birthday party picture or any trip picture. But now I can say " I feel photography"(*9*). It permeate in my life like the disease and I never want to get well!! Every thing I see I put it in a picture. I have my own camera its Nicon F90 it not only a camera it just like a friend for me. The thing that I like to photograph most is the picture that tell the looker a story. Also, the photo that can put in a card and I love photographing flowers and babies(*10*).

Third Entry:

9) *Can you expand on this beautiful idea?*
How do you feel photography?

It is very difficult to explain how do I feel photography. It is an eternity and spontaneity thought when I always put every thing I see in a picture. (*11*)I always think in how beautiful to put things in a photo not only this but to relate things in the picture, the color, the subject.(*12*) The most wonderful thing I learn in photography is that every thing is beautiful " Since I can photograph any thing". When I say every thing I mean every thing,,, the chair, books, pencil, cars, shoes…etc(*13*).

10) *What is the best picture you've ever taken?*
Is it also your favourite? Why? Why not?

I don't have "best picture. I feel that my pictures are just like my children, I can't say I like this more than that. But I have some special picture because of people not me. One of them is " The sad Violin" because it has been chosen by the poet Mohammed Al Swuadi (*14*)for the cover of his last published book.(*15*) Another one is" Birthing smoke" which won the environment competition in RKWC(*16*). Another competition I entered and toke the first prize is the Fifth book fair in the Cultural Foundation for my picture "A child choosing a book".(*17*)

Fourth Entry:

11) *A lovely Description.*

12) *Do you spend a lot of time preparing a photo?*
What is uppermost in your mind when you are setting it up?

Yes it does..
There are several step that I take before I take the shot and those what take the time. First: The Thinking some time takes days but mostly 1 to 3 hours. Then the scatch for the photo which help me put my thought in to paper which make at most 1 hour (*5*). Second: I start preparing for it, some time the thing I have at home is enough but some time I need to pay other think like flower or vegetables.

- What do you mean by upper most!!!(*6*)

12) *I once read a quote which said something like, " The best artist in the world will make the slums of Rio look like the Country Club." Do you agree?*

I totally agree with who said that. One day I was cocking and after I finish cutting the vegetables. I wanted to put the cute parts in the bean. Then I got a wonderful idea of taking a picture for it. And it was really wonderful picture and I put it on our kitchen!!.(*7*) From this you can see that silly thing could be Beautiful. (*8*).

13) *Is this a local poet?*
What are his poems like?

Mohammed Al suwadi mostly write local poems. I like his poems and he had some singer who sing it!!

14) *What an honor!*
Where can I see this cover?

I gave it to you… I hope you like it…(*9*)

15) *I'm very impressed What did the photo look like?*

It is difficult for me to describe the picture. As the chines sad 1000 word can not discrete a picture.

Any way in the picture there were smoke and you can see some trees and buildings throng the smoke…

Here is a sketches of the picture *(The student sketched the picture in her journal).(*10*)*

You can see the photo in the pearl magazine (1995).(*11*)

16) *It sounds as though you are heading for national (and beyond) fame. Have you ever thought of doing a wall calendars?*

I don't understand what you mean will you refreeze the question for me please?(*12*)

Fifth Entry:

5) *Do you keep your sketches after you have taken the photo?*

No I never thought a bout is, but for sure I always keep it until I have the photo I want.

The funny thing is that some sketch I draw on some of my subject not book or maybe on my exam paper!!

6) *'uppermost in your mind' - The most important thing you are thinking about.*

OK...if I have a sketches for the photo I am taking I tried to make view of the photo as near as I can to the sketch. But is I don't I think I don't think about any thing at all. I even sometime don't breath when I take the shot .. you know what I mean.

7) *Do you have a lot of your photos decorating the house?*
Where are they?

Yes .. in my room, kitchen, Also in my friends room!! In their house.

8) *A lovely example.*

9) *I loved both the photo and the cover. Thank you very much.*

10) *Is this like one of your preparation sketches?*

Yes they mostly look like this

11) *I'll check it out. Thanks*

12) *A wall calendar is a calendar with all the months of the year on the bottom half and a big photo on the top half. Every month has a different photo and you turn the pages as each month passes. The brother of one of my friends emigrated to Australia and started financing his photography with wall calendars. That was 15 years ago and he still produces one every year which sells thousands of copies.*

I am thinking a bout that and also to have some card which has my photo in, But I am a fried that want have people satisfactory.

---

6. The Benefits – Some Student Comments

In conclusion, I would like to once again give the students the opportunity to voice their opinions. The comments below have been chosen at random and are quoted here with the permission of the students.

It *is a great idea, I really like it. It has many advantages. First it is a good way of connection between me and the teacher. It is improving my writing and increasing my knowledge. I like it.*

It *learns you how to expand your writing in different ways (by new vocabularies, grammar and so on).*

At *first (before starting to write them) I feared they could be lots of boring writing. But now, I find it lots of fun and very useful because it helps. I'm not sure how but I know it's helpful.*

Now *I realy enjoy it. However, sometimes it took me more than one hours to answer it, if I repeat certain points several times it seems boring.*

I get to know you as a person rather than a teacher. We students sometimes (often!) forget that teachers have a human side. It's interesting to get to know how you think and I guess you feel the same. I can't put it down (or stop writing) whenever I start. I love the way one thing lead to another. I mean, I'm talking about death, UFO's and now politics (Gulf war part 2). You just can't figure out what's next?

It *is really wonderful. Although I don't like writing. The journals makes writing easy. The most interesting part is after I wrote the journals, I really looking forward to read your comment.*

I wrote things that I have never written or tried to express before. Know I try to think of the questions that might arise in the next entry so I make life easier and just write the answers. I can't stop writing.
I like it very much. I think it will be better if it is like a conversation not you are asking and I am answering.

English *never seemed more interesting.*

I got fed up of this journal. At first I was so excited to write. I think that was because it was a new thing to me. A new way to express my feelings but then after I said or mentioned everything I never tried to say before I got fed up. I don't have anything that interests me a lot any more to write about.

It *is a good way to practice writing daily, and I enjoy it a lot because we choose the topics we wont to write about.*

The *first thing I learn which I need in English is the vocabulary. I think that I am writing to a friend because no one force me to write.*

My class mates and I all received the same questions to start with but after the first entry, we all have totally different journals.

As a final footnote, I would simply like to add that if this paper has tempted you to try out journals with your classes, then I have succeeded in what I set out to do.

How the Camel Got Its Hump

How to bring literature back into the EFL classroom

SNEZHA TSONEVA-MATHEWSON
United Arab Emirates University

Introduction

Recent EFL/ ESL approaches refer to the general interaction between the reader and the text, i.e. the reader (re)constructs the text information, based in part on the knowledge drawn from the text and in part from the prior knowledge available to the reader (Barnett, 1989; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). In addition, the term *interactive approaches* refers to the interaction of many cognitive skills that may be used simultaneously in the reading process (Grabe 1991). Simply stated, reading involves an array of low-level, rapid automatic identification skills and an array of higher level comprehension/interpretation skills (Carrell 1988; Rayner & Pollatsek, 1989). Such an understanding of reading ran contrary to the traditional approach in which reading was seen as a reinforcement for oral language instruction, to practice pronunciation and examine vocabulary and grammar, or practice translation. These two major trends have stereotypically been associated with types of texts. For example, innovative ESL classrooms will exploit real life texts from utility bills and clothes labels to newspaper articles, academic articles, etc. depending on the terminal reading objectives. On the other hand, the traditional approach seems to be associated with literary texts, especially ones that are considered classical.

Literature, however, has an important role to play in a modern EFL classroom. There are a number of reasons which justify the use of "real" books, the most compelling one being their aesthetic and artistic value. This stimulates an important facet of human cognition especially in children, the imagination. In addition, classical literature often has a moral message which "provides lessons of life according to contemporary value systems and beliefs. Cultural literacy is important because it reiterates whats important to culture and gives us clues as to how to be socially adept" (Gigliotti, 1997).

This paper presents some general guidelines towards the use of literary texts in an EFL environment and a sample lesson using R. Kipling's story "How the Camel Got His Hump" for a class of 9-11 year old children anywhere in Europe. R. Kipling is an English writer from the end of the last century whose writing may be rather controversial from a modern point of view but is highly valued for the brilliant use of the English language. "How the Camel Got His Hump" is built on the pun: "Humph!", an interjective used to express doubt, displeasure, or contempt, and "hump", the lump on the back of a camel.

1. How to choose a text?

1.1. Consider the learners!

The first variable to consider when choosing a literary text for EFL instruction is the age of the learners and their content schema (a theoretical metaphor of the reader's prior knowledge). Research has found that activating content information plays a major role in students' comprehension and recall of information from a text. The sample lesson below has been geared towards a particular age group, 9-11 year olds in an EFL classroom in Europe. By this age, children in Europe have already developed some content schema for Arabic fairy tales e.g. Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, deserts and camels as well as domestic animals such as the ox, the dog, etc. The second variable to consider is the English language proficiency of the students, which includes skills such as vocabulary, letter and word recognition, grammar, syntactic processing of sentences, bottom-up processing i.e. from word recognition to guessing what follows.

1.2 Consider the text itself!

The text has to be assessed vis-a-vis the above mentioned variables i.e. it has to match the age and content schema of the students. At this point the question of authenticity and adaptation arises. I should remind the readers that the starting point in this paper was real literature and real literary language. As the readers will see below, Kipling's story has had minor changes which include the deletion of several Indian words such as punchaet, indaba, etc. and the reference to the creation of the world. As a general guideline the text should be kept as close to its original as possible in order to deliver its aesthetic message through authentic language. The text should also be assessed in terms of its rhetorical structure (poetry, fiction, fairy tale, repetitive, etc.) vis-a-vis the students' formal schema, i.e. their knowledge about language and textual organization. Kipling's story was specifically chosen for the sentence structure i.e. repetitive, simple sentences and participial clauses which provide grammar activities for the lesson.

Vocabulary (basic, repetitive, etc.) is another variable to consider when choosing a text. It is a critical component of reading comprehension and there is a vocabulary level threshold beyond which no reading strategies such as guessing, inferencing, etc. can be successfully applied. Inevitably there will be unfamiliar words in the text but an EFL teacher most often is aware of which part of the vocabulary is new and can use pre-reading activities to elicit old vocabulary and introduce new vocabulary.

Finally, the layout of the text (letter size, spacing, etc.) is part of the bottom up processing of the text i.e. building from the features of the text upwards towards comprehension. The teacher should be able to type the text with the necessary adaptations on a word processor using spacing and letter size appropriate for the learners. On the other hand, illustrations which may accompany the literary text are part of the top to down processing, i.e. starting with some visual information prior to reading the text itself which will prime the students into a particular conceptual field and/or emotional state, facilitating comprehension.

2. What to do with the text?

2.1. Do pre-reading activities!

Why? Pre-reading activities activate learners' formal and content schemata. In the sample lesson below this means that the teacher should activate the learners' formal schema for for fairy tales (e.g. the opening sentence "Once upon a time...") and their content schema for domestic animals, deserts and camels, the Djinn (genie). Pre-reading activities are also used to elicit familiar vocabulary from learners and introduce new vocabulary,

How? As the readers will see in the sample lesson, there is a variety of activities such as Wh-questions, Yes/No-questions around the rubrics with a lot of visual support (pictures, objects) and TPR (total physical response) activities.

2.2. Do activities while reading!

Why? Reading should always be purposeful, therefore while reading the text students should be fulfilling a task. Being involved in doing things with the text will facilitate comprehension and prevent boredom.

How? Obviously, the activities depend on the text itself. Kipling's story lends itself to acting out the parts of the various animals and the Djinn. Dividing the text into meaningful chunks and providing comprehension questions at any stage will give the reading process a specific task. As you will see in the sample lesson there is a simple comprehension game that gives the while reading a specific purpose.

2.3. Do post-reading activities!

Why? Post-reading activities provide a meaningful link with other linguistic skills; they are used to reinforce vocabulary and grammar (cf. the sample lesson). They can also stimulate reasoning and imagination and can be used to make a moral point.

How? Again the activities here will vary greatly from one text to another, but there is a wide variety of possibilities from drawing pictures by the students to discussing the illustrations that may accompany the text. Inferencing is an activity tightly related to the reading process and is often used for checking comprehension. To reinforce a grammar point which may be new or difficult for the students, the teacher may highlight it in the text and provide exercises. Finally, a discussion about the moral of the story may be related to L1 culture and actually conducted in L1 if possible.

A sample lesson plan

Pre-reading:
Discuss the children's favourite fairy tales either in L1 or L2.

1. Which is your favourite fairy tale?
2. Do you like tales about animals?

Tell them that today they are going to read a very exciting story about a dog, a horse, an ox and..... Ask them to look at the title of the story and to identify the fourth animal. Let them guess the meaning of hump. Either here or later while reading you should explain the meaning of humph, an interjection used to express doubt, displeasure, or contempt.

Then you can show them pictures of a dog with a stick in its mouth, a horse with a bridle and a bit, and an ox with yoke on his neck and introduce the unfamiliar words related to these animals. Through TPR, i.e. acting out, you can introduce the activities that the animals are involved in i.e. the horse trots, the dog carries and fetches and the ox ploughs. Ask the children to imitate the noise the dog, the ox and the horse makes.

The underlined words may be unfamiliar so they will need to be focused upon.

The next step will be to introduce the camel and the desert. Show them a picture of a camel in a desert. Bring to class real objects like thistles and thorny twigs. Questions you may ask:

1. Where does a camel live?
   Stepping stones: Does it live at the North Pole? Does it live in a hot climate?

2. What is there in the desert? Is there snow? Is there sand? Is there dust? Are there many plants? What kind of plants are there?What does a camel eat? Does it eat grass or thorns?

3. What does the camel say? Imitate the noise he makes.
   The concepts of Djinn (genie is more familiar in English now) and magic should be introduced.

Don't forget this is a fairy tale. Possible questions:

1. Do you like stories about genie?
2. Are they good or bad?
3. Which stories do you know about a genie?

Return to the title of the story and ask the children to guess how the camel got his hump. Do not correct their answers. Let them find out in the text i.e. create a specific purpose for reading the story!. Exploit the children's curiosity!

While-reading:

Teacher reads the text aloud while the children are following the text. Bring the text to life through acting out sequences; be an ox, be a dog, be a horse and be a camel and a Djinn.

Ask them again how the camel got his hump to check overall comprehension. Let them tell you as much as they can without asking them questions. Then go back to the text; spend more time concentrating on the parts in which the children have displayed lack of understanding or misunderstanding. Remember: Reading is comprehension! Go through the text as per division on the overhead projector. Make sure the letter size, spacing, and layout are appropriate!

Possible comprehension questions:

Part 1:

1. How do fairy tales begin? Ask for the L1 equivalent and if similar let the children point out the English equivalent guessing only by its place i.e. the beginning of the paragraph.

2. Where did the Camel live?
3. What did he say?

Part 2:

1. Who came and spoke to the Camel?
2. Did the Bear come and speak to the Camel? The yes/no questions are stepping stones to help in case of difficulty.
3. Where did the animals go after speaking to the Camel? Did they stay with the Camel or did they go and tell the Man?

Part 3:

1. What did the Man say to the Three animals?
2. Did he say "Three, O Three, you can have a rest now" or "Three, O Three, you must do more work"?
3. Were they happy about it?
4. What did they do?
5. Did they have a party? Did they have a kind of meeting?

Part 4:

1. Who came along after the Man talked to the animals?
2. Did the Three tell him about Camel?
3. What did they tell him?

Part 5:

1. Did the Djinn go to the Camel?
2. What was the Camel doing?
3. Did the Djinn ask him to work?
4. What did the Camel say? What does this mean?
5. What was the Magic that the Djinn thought of?

Part 6:

1. Did the Camel behave himself?
2. Did the Camel join the Three?
3. What do we call his humph?

A potentially difficult and more specific area might be the comprehension of which animal/s did what. Play the comprehension game (cf. Appendix 1). Ask the students to stick the picture of an animal/s in the right box.

Post reading:

A. Vocabulary

Ask the children to draw pictures of:

- the Djinn rolling in his dust cloak across the desert

- the animals having a pow-wow on the edge of the desert
- the Camel looking at his face in the pool of water

Then compare their pictures with the authors' pictures and the artists' picture (Appendix 2).

B. Grammar

Highlight the participial clauses in the text on the overhead projector. Then ask the students to look at the sentences below and connect each pair into one sentence.

Example:
The Camel came. It was idly chewing thorns.
The Camel came idly chewing thorns.

1. Soon there came along the Djinn of All Deserts. He was rolling in a cloud of dust.
2. "Whew!" said the Djinn. He was whistling.
3. The Djinn found the idle Camel. The Camel was looking at his face in a pool of water.

C. Inferencing

Ask the students the following questions which they can answer by inferencing from the text. Direct them to which part of the text to go if they have difficulties. Remember that reading integrates many skills including making inferences:

1. Did the Three live in the desert with the Camel? Where did they live? Who did they live with? Who did they work for?
2. What did the Three tell the Man after speaking to the Camel?
3. What was the Magic that the Djinn did?

D. Sequencing

Divide the class into six groups as many as the parts of the tale; give each group shuffled strips with sentences from one paragraph and ask the students to arrange the sentences in order without looking at the text. Then ask them to read the sequence of sentences starting with the group which has Part 1.

E. Discussion

Have a discussion about the moral value of the fairy tale.
Is the Djinn good or bad? Is it right for anyone to be idle?
The discussion may be conducted in L1 as the children may not have enough vocabulary and confidence to express more complex reasoning. Relate it to a similar moral point in L1 culture if any.

References

Barnett, M. (1989). *More than meets the eye: Foreign language reading.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Carrel, P.L. (1988). Interactive text processing: Implications for ESL/second language reading classrooms. In P. Carrel, J. Devine and D. Eskey (eds) *Interactive approaches to second language reading* pp. (239-259). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Carrel, P.L., & Eisterhold, J. (1983). Schemata Theory and ESL reading pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17, 553-573.

Gigliotti, M. (1997). Using "Real" Literature in an ESL classroom. In Christine Coombe and Salah Troudi, eds. Tradition and Innovation *TESOL Arabia '97 Third International Conference Proceedings* 2: 138-143

Grabe, William (1991). Current Developments in Second Language Reading Research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25,3:375-406.

Kipling, Rudyard. (1987). How the Camel Got His Hump. *Just So Stories.* Random House, New York

Rayner, K. & Pollatsek, A. (1989). The psychology of reading. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Simultaneous Interpretation for Oral Fluency

SANI M. YAGI
Sultan Qaboos University

Introduction

Teaching oral fluency to ESL students is a dilemma that many a teacher is baffled by. Bresnihan and Stoops (1996:30) complain that "One of the most difficult challenges in teaching a foreign language abroad is finding ways to help students improve their oral fluency. This is especially true in countries where students generally share a common mother tongue and have little or no exposure to English outside the classroom". They have found out that pair and group communication tasks, as they are structured in ESL classrooms in non-English speaking countries, are often ineffective. They say, "When students are asked to perform these activities, they often just read aloud mechanically from their textbooks or chat in their native language. Although they may truly want to practice and express their ideas in English, it is hard for them to actually do it, and it is hard for teachers to convince them to try".

Other teachers complain about conversation in the ESL classroom. Washburn and Christianson (1996:1) observe that, "One of the challenges of teaching conversation strategies is to present learners with the authentic need to use [these strategies] in the classroom. Another is to monitor and provide feedback to learners in large classes." Serrano-Sanchez (1996:95) finds that, "In advanced level English classes discussions are one of the most widely used oral activities. The problem arises when we have shy students who do not like talking in front of the whole class. If we want them to speak, we have to question them directly and even then, they utter only short sentences, making it difficult to judge what their fluency or accuracy would be in longer utterances".

Smith (1995:1) discerns that, "There is often precious little conversation even when there is talk. Teachers and students usually agree that they want to have conversations in the classroom but this goal too often proves elusive".

These quotes illustrate some of the problems of oral fluency development. The communication situation is artificially created by the teacher; so students do not find a genuine need to communicate, and when there is a genuine discussion they revert to their native language because that is their normal vehicle for the exchange of ideas. Some feel too shy to carry on a fictitious conversation because they either have no ideas to communicate or they find it ridiculous to talk for the sake of talking. Worse still is that they will have to talk to their own friends in an unnatural way, in a foreign language. The solution, as I see it, is to find some natural context where there are genuine ideas to be communicated and there is a genuine need to communicate them in the foreign language. One ideal context, I have found, is the act of translating; it gives students motivation to use the foreign language and gives them ideas to communicate with it.

Below is a technique which naturally fosters the use of the foreign language for the communication of authentic ideas. It rests on simultaneous interpretation (SI) in which ESL students translate a native language discourse into English as they listen to it. Mention the word "translation" in the context of ESL teaching, and you have committed a taboo. The reason is the outlawed Grammar Translation Method, but in the course of this paper I intend to demonstrate that translation can be extremely effective in the teaching of ESL. I will first discuss the merits of using translation in the ESL classroom, then I will propose a teaching technique which utilises translation, and finally I will report on an experimental study that demonstrates the effectiveness of this technique.

Merits of Translation in the ESL Classroom

There are at least three merits for using translation to teach ESL. One is peculiar to simultaneous interpretation (SI) whilst the others are true of translation in general.

Simultaneous interpretation is one type of conference translation in which the translator renders a source language (SL) discourse as they listen to it into the target language (TL) without being given the floor at any point in time. SI is useful in supplying students with ready-made native language information to communicate in their second language. In SI, information is whispered into the ear of the learner preventing them from running out of ideas when they talk in the second language. They will not be uttering only short sentences, as Serrano-Sanchez (1996) complained, and therefore their fluency and accuracy will be greatly facilitated by simultaneous interpretation.

The fact that SI relieves the learner of the responsibility of formulating their ideas while speaking means that they can concentrate their mental resources on the mechanics of encoding translated ideas into the foreign language. They can allocate more attention to the retrieval of words from mental lexicons and to the grammatical formulation of sentences; so they should be able to produce utterances of a higher degree of linguistic accuracy. Furthermore, the exemption of formulating ideas implies by consequence exemption of planning and organising the discourse, and that in turn leads to concentrating attention on the sentence they are uttering without having to allocate much attention resources to pre-planning the next sentence. Because of the surplus attention resources that SI causes, the learner can produce significantly more fluent utterances.

The second merit is that L2 learners practice translation consciously and subconsciously, with the teacher's consent and without it. If one checks student's notebooks and textbooks, they will invariably find words and sentences written in the students' native language. Some teachers have realised this fact and one commented saying, "No matter how hard [teachers] may try, adult learners simply cannot escape the influence of the first language. They will always be asking themselves, 'What does _____ mean?' and decoding the answer in their first language, if not orally where all can hear, then mentally where few can fathom" (Weschler, 1997:3).

When people grow up speaking one language, they get accustomed to thinking in terms of the conceptual world it has associated with, accustomed to their community's theory of reality as reflected in their language. They quickly learn to interpret their new experiences in terms of elements, events, and situations in their native language's conceptual world; ie, their native language filters their experiences and shapes their perception of reality (see Pawley, 1991). In Grace (1987) pre-print draft (p.163), it is asserted that, "Whenever anything slightly novel needs to be expressed, it is likely to be expressed by a slightly novel use of conventional means. But this in itself modifies the system of precedents from which speakers work. If something more radically new needs to be expressed, and if the need is sufficiently persistent, a way will surely eventually be found to express it, and the conceptual world of the language will be modified accordingly. Thus, although the conceptual world as it exists at any particular moment is a strong influence upon our perceptions and our thought, it nevertheless does not confine us in unyielding restraints".

By the same token, when learners come across new experiences that their foreign language offers, they are bound to filter them through their native language; for that is the conventional and familiar way of perceiving the world. These experiences are explained in terms of learners' familiar conceptual elements, events, and situations, then their conceptual world will eventually be modified reflecting the new experiences offered by the foreign language. For the latter to influence the conceptual world of the learners' native language, there must be a reasonably long transition during which they will come to terms with the foreign concepts.

Almost any abstract noun in English will never have an identical equivalent in the student's foreign language unless the word is borrowed from it in the first place. The colour terms in English and Navaho as sited by Catford (1965) is an excellent illustration of how perception of the objective reality of the colour spectrum differs across language cultures. What English refers to as 'orange' and 'yellow' is perceived by the Navaho as 'lico' and what is refered to as 'green', 'blue', and 'purple' is seen by Navaho speakers as 'dootl'iz'. Even some functional words like prepositions can pose serious problems for foreign language learners because of divergence between the native and the foreign conceptual worlds. It is confusing for Japanese beginners, for example, to know whether a driver sits behind or in front of the steering wheel in a car because Japanese and English have different views on the matter. Therefore, ignoring the influence of a student's native language on learning English can only prolong the period needed for the total internalisation and subsequent adoption of its concepts.

The third merit is cognitive. There is evidence from Psycholinguistics and Cognitive Psychology that L1 and L2 lexicons within the same speaker are semantically, and associationally linked (Channell, 1988). In fact, many ESL specialists, as well, subscribe to the same view and recognise the differences between first and second language acquisition. Weschler (1997:3) is convinced that "the very process of learning the mother tongue acts in hard-wiring the circuitry of the growing brain... As anyone can attest who has marvelled at the ease children learn language and struggled themselves in later years to learn a second language, an already wired brain is simply not as flexible."

A bilingual's first and second languages are integrated in a network, where concepts mediate between first and second language translates. The separate linguistic systems of the two languages are simultaneously active and in interaction with one another. Experimental evidence from category verification tasks (eg, Caramazza and Brones 1980), picture naming and translation (eg, Potter, et al 1984), and lexical decision tasks (eg, Schwanenflugel and Rey 1986) corroborate this notion. For instance, Potter, et al (1984) conclude that the bilingual's lexical systems are connected both within and across their first and second languages through a language-independent, a modal, conceptual representation They have found that the concept of a picture or a word stimulus is retrieved as rapidly from one stimulus as from the other. In one experiment, they found that proficient bilinguals were able to name a picture in the second language (L2) and to translate a word into it in a comparable time, because in both cases interpretation requires evoking the conceptual representation of the stimulus; ie, L1-L2 word associations are not made directly between the bilingual's languages but rather through the mediation of neutral concepts. To test whether word association might be true only of fluent L2 speakers, Potter, et al (1984) conducted another experiment using non-fluent subjects. They discovered that these subjects were slightly faster in naming pictures in L2 than translating words into it. This means that even non-proficient L2 speakers interpret pictures and words through a mediating concept which is common to both languages.

ESL students seem to use a common conceptual base to convert L1 expressions into L2 and vice versa. They do not have duplicate conceptual entries serving their respective languages, but rather one common stock of concepts that represents their own perception and understanding of the various events, situations, and elements experienced in the worlds of their languages. If this is truly the case, then we do have grounds to substantiate the claim that no matter how hard ESL students try to separate between the worlds of their languages, they will not be able to. Furthermore, we can understand in part how language learning takes place: vocabulary learning is achieved either by tagging new foreign labels or words to concepts that are already present in their memories or by creating new concepts and attaching the new foreign words to them. In the latter case, ESL learners will attempt to create a link between the new concept and the concept serving an old L1 word by extending its meaning. Failing that, they will simply leave it without an L1 label; thus, the L2 word will have no native language equivalent.

With this understanding, mother tongue facilitation and interference in vocabulary learning can be easily accounted for. Where there is a complete match between the concept of a new foreign word and a concept already existent in the student's memory, facilitation takes place; they simply have to remember the new foreign label. Where the word's concept does not exist in their memory, they will experience difficulty for they have to do two things: create the concept and attach the new word to it. These two cases are relatively easy to teach and to learn. It is where there is partial overlap between the concepts of L1 and L2 words that more serious difficulties of teaching and learning arise. The partial overlap might exteriorise in one of four cases:

1. A new foreign word's concept is a subset of a pre-existing concept.
2. It is a superset of more than one pre-existing concepts.
3. It is partly a subset of a pre-existing concept and partly a new one.
4. It is an amalgam of subsets of several pre-existing concepts.

The fact that L1 and L2 lexicons are separate does not mean that they are also insulated from one another. It does not exclude interactions between lexical items within one language and across the two languages. Free recall based experiments carried out as early as the fifties (eg, Jenkins and Russell 1952; Deese 1959; Bousfield 1953; Jenkins, Mink, and Russell, 1958) clearly point to intra-lingual lexical association. Jenkins and Russell have shown that when stimulus words are presented at random, highly associated words tend to be recalled together. Clustering words like this is an indication that lexical items within the same language are connected with each other at the permanent memory level. It is most likely that recall of associated words together depends on the strength of association between them. Deese (1959) discovered that lists of high frequency associates are better recalled than those of low frequency associates, or those of zero-frequency associates. Jenkins, et al (1958) found that the higher the degree of association between a pair of words, the greater their chance of being recalled together.

Inter-language connections between lexical items have also been observed in several studies (eg, Chen and Ng 1989; Jin and Fischler 1987; Cristoffanini, Kirsner, and Milech 1986). In a lexical decision task, De Groot and Nas (1991) found that including the translate of a stimulus word in the set of primes used in the same experimental session reduces reaction times significantly; this suggests that whilst the lexical items of the two languages are separately stored, some degree of connection is maintained between translation equivalents. The connection is most likely through the common conceptual base. In fact, Yaghi (1994:152) talks of this very idea in relation to translators and says that, "The strength of association between translates depends on the amount of conceptual information they share and/or the frequency of association between them. When reference is made to a concepts, conceptual clusters, and assemblages. They will all be excited to a degree depending on their conceptual proximity and their level of collocation or association. Evoking a concept brings its [word] . . . to be awareness of the translator. As there is a tendency for an SL [word] . . . to be paired with its translate in, exciting the concept by an SL [word] . . . results in bringing its TL counterpart to the awareness of the translator."

If this is true, then Weschler's claim that "adult learners simply can not escape the influence of the first language" is substantiated. Why then should teachers deny themselves the opportunity of making use of the great resources of the mother tongue? It is indeed wiser to guide ESL students in finding L1-L2 equivalents than to leave them to their own devices.

SI as a Teaching Technique

SI tasks can be carried out in a classical language laboratory or a multimedia computer lab, but not in a traditional classroom. The reason is simply that simultaneous interpretation necessitates listening and speaking at the same time, and that cannot be achieved without audio equipment that is capable of playing back an SL discourse and concurrently recording its translation. Multimedia labs have an advantage over traditional labs because they offer audio and video equipment in addition to computers. For purposes of this teaching technique, only the audio equipment and electronic dictionaries are needed, but with little imagination it is also possible to modify the SI technique. It can make use of satellite television and internet sites that have real-audio content to improve the passive skill of aural fluency.

Although SI is based on translating, it is aimed at teaching English rather than translation techniques; so the emphasis is on oral fluency in the English language and not on accuracy, fidelity, or translation problems. Furthermore, the language of interaction in the classroom is exclusively English. The teaching material, however, is two types: that which is studied and that which is listened to on tape; the earlier is in English whilst the latter is in the students' native language. The rationale is that the native language material, which only features on tape and is never publicly broadcast, is but an aide to teaching English; it is used to facilitate

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the development of oral fluency in English. Therefore, there is no occasion in the ESL classroom when L1 becomes subject of teaching.

The native language material is restricted to a tape recording used to stimulate speaking in the English language. An English passage chosen by the teacher is either translated by teachers themselves or given to someone to translate into the native language. Then the native language version is recorded on tape and that is the source that will whisper content to students to communicate into English. The passage is best selected on a current topic from English newspaper or magazine feature articles, or TV or radio interview transcripts. The language there tends to be day to day idiomatic English, be it standard or colloquial, and the topic is of interest. The most important consideration is to ensure that the passage is relevant, theme and language-wise, so that students do not get bored talking about a dull subject or using bookish English. Let me pose for a minute and give a synopsis of the SI technique.

At the beginning of a teaching session, the teacher introduces the English passage that they want their students to work on. They read the passage slowly asking students to silently translate it into their mother tongue as it is being read. Then they read it a second time, sentence by sentence, requesting students once more to mentally translate as they listen and stopping to comment on what a sentence means. They write idiomatic expressions, speech formulas, unfamiliar words, and interesting grammatical structures on the board for students to take note of. The teacher either reads the passage for the third time or gets a student to read it. Now students are presumed to have comprehended the ideas well and to have been taught ways of expressing them in a native-like manner. They are requested afterwards to play their tapes and listen through to their mother tongue pre-recorded version of the English passage. The students' active speaking session begins when the teacher asks them to start translating the recorded passage back into English using their notes. In the meantime, the teacher monitors their performance observing some of their errors. When the teacher thinks they have had enough practice, the class are asked to stop drilling and to give a final rendition of the passage but without pausing the tape or rewinding it and without the aid of their notebooks. An evaluation session follows, where samples of individual performances are broadcast to the whole group and the individuals concerned are given the opportunity to identify their own errors before their peers are invited to.

To discuss the rationale for each of these steps, let us first consider the passage presentation. The teacher reads the passage for the first time to present a model performance whose pronunciation, structure, lexicon, and idiomaticity students are expected to emulate. Students will also listen for the overall meaning of the passage before considering it more carefully. They are asked to mentally translate it into their mother tongue as it is being read for the purpose of getting them to check their understanding of its content. If they attempt to translate it, they will be able to identify areas of difficulty with the passage; hence, they will be able to question the teacher on them.

Reading the passage a second time is to ensure that its vocabulary, idioms, and speech formulas are understood and learned well; for the students are to reproduce these in their translation session. Writing these on the board is classical classroom practice in which the written word reinforces the spoken one. Also students can write them down in their notebooks for ease of reference when they start drilling on SI.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The third reading is intended to give the natural flow of the passage without interruption. Students can then have an appreciation for the last time of what their final product will need to sound like. Who will render the third reading is not too important. It is nice for the students themselves to read it, but teachers have to choose a good student model who will not denaturalise the flow of the text.

After these three readings, students are encouraged to listen once to the entire native language version of the passage under discussion. Thus, they will familiarise themselves with their teacher's translation of the passage and will consequently learn whether their understanding matches what the teacher purports to be the native language meaning of the passage. In cases of difference of understanding, the students are encouraged to get clarification.

With the readings and discussion, students are expected to have comprehended the English passage fully, but with their drilling on simultaneous interpretation they are expected to memorise all words and speech formulas in the passage and to learn how to express them in native-like ways. Rehearsal, as cognitive psychologists say, is essential to the transfer of information from the working to the long-term memory. Here teachers achieve student learning instantly, "in cash". The relentless problem of transfer from passive to active knowledge is resolved; students learn vocabulary, speech formulas, and structures that they put to use immediately. This use strengthens the link between a word, term, or speech formula and its conceptual base, the thought, it stands for. The more students drill on SI, the more they memorise that which we want them to.

A further advantage is that students' error avoidance is reduced significantly. Because they have to render specific ideas into English, they cannot do without those words, speech formulas, and structures that the activity is instilling in them. They have to use the prescribed ways of expression most appropriate to the ideas in the passage; if they are not comfortable with them, they have to practise further. Without SI, teachers would labour on teaching an item but have little control on getting their students to use it. Delivery in this teaching method is instant.

Once the drilling has finished and the students feel comfortable translating the passage into English, their final rendition boost their fluency. Here, they will be producing an uninterrupted monologue in the language we are teaching. They will not be hindered by running out of ideas. They will not be barred by loss of words. They will not be delayed by looking for an appropriate grammatical structure. The native language version provides ready-made ideas; the tape whispers into their ears what to say and gives them pointers on how to say them. The L1 words prime them to produce the English words that they have just learned. The first language grammatical structures will aid them in the organisation of thought; they do not need to think from scratch as to how they should formulate an idea.

Some critics might say, "But that is an artificial situation, and in real life no one will whisper ideas, words, and structures into their ears". That is absolutely true; no denial. The counter argument, however, is that the entire classroom situation is an artificial one anyway. Can anyone claim that a conversation whose topic is pre-determined by the teacher is a natural conversation? Foreign language classrooms are inherently artificial; for learning a language is naturally done when people are too young to appreciate what they are doing. Furthermore, the SI activity is a natural occasion for the transfer of ideas from one language to another. Although there is no real audience for their speech and hence the communication act is incomplete, this is less artificial than the traditional pair work where classmates who share one common native language are asked to talk to one another in a foreign tongue about some information that they have no need to talk to one another about. SI fosters less artificiality.

In the last stage, performance evaluation is collectively done to further oral fluency. Now students will have real rather than faked arguments; they will disagree about the best ways of expressing specific ideas and will critically assess the implication of each other's linguistic use. Furthermore, such evaluation raises their awareness of their own errors, a factor that can lead to a conscious change in how they say things. Perhaps it is not psychologically comfortable to be subject of criticism, but personal experience proves that this is not a genuinely serious concern. Once a classroom culture is established, students do not mind criticism. In fact, students will remember better corrections made by their peers than those made by the teacher; for it is the job of the teacher to make corrections and it is expected of him or her to know better. Their peers, on the other hand, are not supposed to know more so their corrections will stay in mind longer.

The Experiment

A group of senior students went through a semester-long experience of this technique and praised it in abundance; they learned almost one thousand vocabulary items and speech formulas. However, our scientific curiosity demands that we quantify the value of this technique. In the remaining sections, a report will be made of an experiment carried out on sophomore students.

Subjects

The subjects who participated in this experiment are all from a sophomore reading class. They are all Omanis whose native language is Arabic; they are studying to become English school teachers. The 20 female students in this class were divided into two groups of more or less comparable ability; their average marks in continuous assessment were used as a guide. Four students were eventually excluded from the experiment; two because of their failure to attend the post-test and the other two because of matching the absent ones.

Stimulus

The stimulus passage was a short feature article written by Hidajet Delic, an Associated Press journalist, for U.S. News Today. It dealt with the theme of celebrities being used by charities to boost fund-raising. The passage is three paragraphs long with 283 words in total and a word-list of 193, twenty-nine of which were unfamiliar to the students under investigation.

The Arabic version of the stimulus is less than five minutes in duration. It was recorded on the left tracks of the students' audio tapes reserving the right track for the students' discourse.

The Arabic recording was done at a speech rate reasonably slower than normal spoken Arabic, to reduce the detrimental effect of simultaneous listening and speaking. The quantitative details about the Arabic passage may be summarised in this table:

Arabic Version of the Passage

Duration (minutes)	4.7
Total Number of Words	273
Word List Items	194
Propositions	22
Idiomatic Expressions	31
Grammatical Structures (Sentences):	12
Simple Sentences	7
Compound Sentences	2
Complex Sentences	3
Speech Rate (syll/sec)	2.7
Sum of Pause Durations (%)	45

Instrumentation

The experiment was carried out in a language laboratory where each student had a computer station with full multimedia capability. The English passage under study was displayed on the screen and an electronic dictionary was occasionally consulted by individual students to look up words that had not been discussed in class. Once the analysis of the passage had been completed, the students used sophisticated audio units to listen and/or record speech. These units are capable of outputting the stimulus discourse binaurally and of recording student input stereophonically, thus allowing both the stimulus and response to be delivered to each ear. At the same time, the tracks may be separated by delivering the stimulus to one ear and the response to the other. The choice opted for here was to deliver the stimulus binaurally to reduce the mental strain of listening and speaking simultaneously.

In the experimental analysis stage, each student's audio tape was converted from analogue to digital, then both tracks were graphically transformed. The details of the graphic signals facilitated speech transcription and permitted probing into all types of dysfluency. Sound Edit on the Macintosh was used in the playback and transcription stage.

Experimental Procedures

Initially a colleague and I had the intention of conducting this experiment using two groups of students, but then due to timetable limitations, I had to pilot the study on one group of senior students for a whole semester. When the technique proved successful, I decided to run a one time experiment on a group of sophomore students using one of the early passages that were tried on the senior students. The experimental design adopted here is still a two-group design of the pretest-posttest control group type.

Two groups of eight students each participated in the experiment. The experimental procedure was explained at the outset; the students were told that both groups would listen to an English passage, would participate in a discussion on its content, vocabulary, speech formulas, and structures, then they would be instructed to retell the passage in English as fully as possible and with as much authenticity as they could. They were specifically told to reproduce as many of the story's ideas, words, idioms, and structures as they possibly could. In cases where they remembered an idea but did not remember how it was phrased, they were encouraged to use their own ways of expression. They were told that their ultimate goal was to communicate the story's ideas fluently and in a native-like manner. No time limit was set. Their speech was recorded on tape, and that is what constituted our pretest.

Afterwards, the experimental group was asked to remain in the main laboratory whilst the control group was directed to the self-access lab. The experimental group then listened to an Arabic version of the stimulus passage and was asked to retell it in English once more. They were given the same instructions as before but told that this time the Arabic version was there to remind them of the content. Their task was not to translate the passage back into English; therefore, they did not need to worry about translation fidelity or about missing words and sentences. Rather, the task was to communicate the content of the passage as authentically and as fully as possible using any ways of expression that they felt comfortable with. The students drilled on retelling the passage in English as they simultaneously listened to its Arabic version before they gave their final uninterrupted rendition, and that constituted our simultaneous interpretation test.

The control group was taken to the self-access laboratory to prepare for the last phase of the experiment which was to be given the following day. They were told to break into pairs and to practise retelling one another the content of the passage as fully and as authentically as possible. Their aim was to use as much as they could of the original vocabulary, speech formulas, and structures, so that they would perform better on the experiment the following day.

Once the tasks had been completed, both groups were requested to come back the following day for the posttest. They listened to the same English passage a couple of times, then once to the instructions that they had been given the day before for the pretest; they were requested once again to retell the passage as fully and as authentically as possible. In this posttest, there was no utilisation of either the English or Arabic versions of the discourse and there was no time limit on how long the students took to retell it.

Analysis Procedures

The Arabic stimulus passage, the two groups' pretest and posttest discourses, and the experimental groups' simultaneous interpretation pieces were digitally converted, graphically transformed, and their contents transcribed. The sound signals of pretest and posttest passages appeared in single channels, whilst simultaneous interpretation discourses were separated into Arabic and English sound signals. These in turn were displayed in dual channels with the stimulus Arabic signal in the top channel and the student's English discourse in the lower one; thus facilitating analysis of the effect of Arabic prompting on students' speech. Each sound, linguistic or otherwise, that the students produced in their passages were recorded; speech bursts of any duration and pauses of 200 millisecond duration or longer were measured and recorded.

Once the sound signal analysis and transcription were completed, content analysis started. Words and syllables in each passage were counted, word-lists compiled, dysfluencies isolated, propositions and idiomatic expressions identified, and grammatical structures categorised.

In word and syllable counts, every instance of a word and every meaningful syllable excluding those in false starts and in pause fillers were tallied. These counts were used to calculate speech rates in words/second and syllables/second units by dividing the total number of syllables or words by the duration of an entire recording in seconds.

Two word counts have been used here: the raw count used in the calculation of speech rates and the one in word-lists. The difference is that the first takes all instances of words into account, whilst the second takes stock of the vocabulary used excluding repetitions.

Instances of dysfluency include word parts, meaningless sounds, pause-fillers, hesitations, false starts, and successive repetitions. Although most types of dysfluency are inherent to spoken language, an excessive amount in foreign language speech can impede the act of communication. Brown and Nation (1997:4) agree that, "Signs of fluency include a reasonably fast speed of speaking and only a small number of pauses and 'ums' and 'ers'".

Content analysis focuses as well on the ideas contained in a piece of discourse. The ideas students wish to communicate are labelled here as propositions. A proposition is a thought unit expressed by a topic and a comment; ie, the subject and verb in a verbal sentence, or the subject and predicate in a stative sentence. A proposition, for our purposes, is the central part of a sentence; therefore, it is invariably located in main clauses and never in subordinate clauses.

Idiomatic expressions are not exclusively those phrases or clauses whose meaning cannot be inferred from the total meaning of their constituents. They are rather speech formulas, phrasal verbs, collocates, or conventionalised expressions that are completely lexicalized, partly lexicalized, or schematic (see Pawley, 1985). They include such phrases as "a handful of", "dedicated to X's memory", and "hundreds of millions of dollars".

Grammatical structures were identified using an Ergo piece of software called Bracket Doctor. This is an NLP grammatical parser that classifies sentences, among other things, and draws trees for their constituents. The only pertinent piece of information adopted here was the classification of sentences into simple, compound, and complex.

Results

At first, it was necessary to establish whether the experimental and control groups came from the same population; ie, whether there were any significant differences between them that could bias the results. To do that, their pretests were compared for dysfluency, inactivity, wordlists, idiomaticity, grammatical sophistication, and idealoadedness. If one group were inherently better, its performance on the first attempt of retelling the contents of the English passage would have been significantly better. If the differences between their performances were not significant, then the conclusion would be that the control and experimental groups were of similar competence. Using t-test, the two groups performances in the prettests were compared and the following results were obtained:

Aspect of performance	t-value for 7 df	p-value
Dysfluency	.240	.8172
Inactivity	2.027	.0822
Wordlist	1.730	.1272
Idiomaticity	.357	.7318
GramSophistication	2.049	.0796
IdeaLoadedness	1.528	.1705

The table clearly shows that differences between the two groups' pretests are not significant. It is safe, therefore, to make the claim that initial differences between the control and experimental groups are not likely to influence their performance on the posttests. Let us now analyse this performance by comparing the posttests with one another then the two tests with the simultaneous interpretation test; we will use the t-test for the first and ANOVA for the second.

To determine the degree of fluency in the students' discourses, two aspects of their performance will be investigated: the magnitude of inactivity and the amount of dysfluency. The first is determined by calculating the ratio of pausing in the students' discourses, then the posttests' ratios will be compared using a two-tailed matched t-test. The result [t(7)=10.146] indicates that the inactivity ratio in the experimental group's posttest is significantly lower than that in the control group's with a mean difference of 19.875%. Performing a comparison across the three tests confirms that the students have had distinct ratios [F(2,14)= 217.616, p<.0001]. The largest inactivity ratio has been found to be in the control group's posttest (77.375%) and the smallest in SI (46.125%), whilst the experimental group's posttest ratio (57.5%) has been found to be in between. This means that the students who used the SI task achieved a higher degree of fluency than those that did not.

The second aspect of performance used to measure students' fluency is the frequency of hesitations, false starts, repetitions, and pause-fillers. Although these are inherent to spoken language, when they exceed some threshold in a foreign speaker's discourse they blemish it and make it sound influent. To find out how fluent the groups were on posttests, the frequencies of dysfluency are compared; the result [t(7)= 39.401] makes it abundantly clear that the experimental group were more fluent than the control group, the mean difference being almost 23 instances. When these tests are compared with the SI test using one-way repeated measures ANOVA, the same conclusions are confirmed [F(2,14)= , p<.0001]; SI being with the smallest average of dysfluencies (36), the experimental group's posttest with about 45, and the control group's with an average of 68 instances.

When the size of students' vocabulary is investigated, the experimental group's posttest shows superiority over the control group's [t(7)=67.354]; thereby indicating that the simultaneous interpretation method has made a highly significant difference. Whilst the control group used a wordlist of approximately 67 items in their posttest, the experimental group managed to enlarge theirs to an average of 136 items. The list of words used in the simultaneous interpretation task is even larger (165 items on average). When the wordlists in the three tests are compared, the differences between them prove to be highly significant [F(2,14)=5950.455, p<.0001]; therefore, the type of task does influence the amount of vocabulary used in a student's discourse.

Idiomaticity gives an aura of nativelikeness to speech; hence, it is necessary to learn which group's performance was more native-like. The frequencies of idiomatic, formulaic, and conventionalised collocates in the posttests are found to be significantly different [t(8)=16.803] for the two groups. The same holds true when the posttests are compared with SI [F(2,14)= 479.922, p<.0001]. Roughly speaking, the control group had slightly more than one third of the idiomatic expressions in the experimental group's posttest and a little less than one quarter of those in SI (4.25, 12.5, 18.375, respectively).

The grammatical structures in a spoken language discourse tend to be simpler than those in written texts, yet invariably relying heavily on short and simple sentences gives the feeling of fragmentation and lack of sophistication in written as well as spoken language. To check the level of sophistication in the two groups' posttests, sentences have been classified as either simple or compound and complex, then the groups' frequencies of the latter category have been compared with one another. Once again compound and complex structures in the two groups' posttests are found to be significantly different [t(7)= 7.937], and when they are compared with those in SI, the same result is confirmed [F(2,14)=126, p<.0001]. SI has exhibited the largest number of compound and complex structures and the control group's posttest the smallest.

Propositions are the main arguments, the ideas in a piece of discourse; hence, it is interesting to learn whether the suggested teaching method can actually improve the content of students' discourses. For this purpose, a two-tailed matched t-test has been applied to the frequencies of propositions in the control and experimental groups' posttests to find out if they differ on idea-loadedness. It shows them to be distinctly different [t(7)=14.387]. When the frequencies of propositions in the two groups' posttests and in SI are compared using one-way repeated measures ANOVA, the results support the same conclusion [F(2,14)= 482.874, p<.0001]. The mean frequency of propositions is 6.625 for the control group's posttest, 13.249 for the experimental group's, and 19.251 for SI.

In conclusion, we can say that although both control and experimental groups belong to the same population, the experimental group exhibited in the posttest lower degrees of inactivity and dysfluency, but larger wordlists, more idiomaticity and grammatical sophistication, and a higher density of ideas. Similarly, their performance on the simultaneous interpretation test manifested the same trend though stronger. It is safe to conclude, therefore, that the SI technique is responsible for these results.

Exposure of Errors

The distinction between competence and performance, active and passive linguistic knowledge, and productive and receptive skills is unanimously accepted by language specialists. The challenge that faces foreign language teachers is to make students' performance reflect their competence, their active knowledge exhibit their passive knowledge, and their productive skills match their receptive skills. Whilst there are various methods of achieving this goal, SI is unrivalled in efficiency in this regard.

As explained earlier, SI offers for rendition into the foreign language a natural native language discourse which uses the equivalent of the taught structures, idiomatic expressions, and vocabulary items. Hence, students are forced to use the new concepts and structures to retell the native language discourse in English. Because they have the opportunity to drill on using the new items in class, they have a better chance of learning what the concepts mean and how they are used. In the process of learning, however, students are bound to form wrong hypotheses about the meaning and usage of these items, and that constitutes a unique opportunity for the teacher to intervene with their correction and before an error fossilises.

SI reduces error avoidance to a minimum. The fact that the stimulus native language discourse mirrors the content that they are asked to render into English necessitates that they use the very concepts and structures that the teacher taught at the beginning of the class period because they are the most suitable. Using alternative ways of expression is always a possibility, yet the pressures of simultaneity makes it inevitable that students consult their notebooks rather than search for an alternative. Furthermore, because of the students' desire to learn and due to teachers' encouragement, they will attempt to use the new items. Once they do, their misconceptions about the structures, meanings, and usage will be readily exposed.

Because of the recency of learning, the new concepts and structures may be unstable and, hence, students will display some inconsistency in their usage and pronunciation. An alert teacher will identify these and take the necessary corrective measures. They may explain the concepts further and give their students more practice.

Students' errors in syntax, vocabulary, and idiomaticity need to be analysed and categorised. During their monitoring, teachers must listen for errors that individual students make and when some errors are found to be common, they must make the time to discuss them with the class as a group. In fact, teachers may also identify where students exhibit hesitations and false starts, for that is an indication that the structures, idiomatic expressions, and vocabulary items being taught are unstable; therefore, they need further enforcement.

To illustrate how SI exposes errors, the discourses used for our experiment have been analysed and the errors categorised. Here is a table showing the errors made by one student:

	Context of Errors	**Category of Errors**
1.	Diana is **considered** to be an emblematic of the transformation which...	Complement, Verb Pattern, Article
2.	Elizabeth Taylor and Elton John are the eponymous of the Aids assistance and Kim Basinger with animal rights...	Complement, Article Preposition
3.	Institutions **consider** them as very vital aspect in fund-raising	Verb Pattern, Article

4.	Most fund organizations depend on the celebrities to make people aware of these kinds of issues.	Article
5.	The number of the celebrities who adopted issues like these were small	Article Noun-Verb Agreement
6.	Larry Copald, the chairman of the Environment Protection Lobby who said, "It is very sad...".	Fragment
7.	**Help** them carrying the message to the people	Verb Pattern
8.	One hundred hospitals, charity fund, and a humanitarian organization	Adjective-Noun Agreement
9.	It is expected to reach to hundreds of thousands of dollars	Preposition
10.	The most effective fund-raiser celebrity	Order of Adjectives

An analysis of these errors indicates that there are five major problems that the teacher needs to address with this student: the complement after a linking verb (1, 2), verb patterns (1, 3,7), noun-verb agreement (5), adjective-noun agreement (8), and fragments (6). Of minor importance are the errors in articles (4,5), prepositions (2, 9), and order of adjectives (10). Some of these errors are common to the class as a whole (eg, complement of a linking verb); therefore, the teacher needs to discuss them with the group and keep those unique to a particular student for a private conference. They need to remind the class at large, for example, that a linking verb as in (2) can either be followed by a noun phrase or an adjective, and if the latter is the case then the adjective need not be modified by a definite article, etc.

Upon analysis of the same student's hesitations and false starts, the following items have been found to be unstable (the numbers between parentheses stand for pause durations in seconds):

	Context of Hesitation and False Start	Category of Problem
1.	A musical concert in 1985 e... (1.766) for thee (0.627) Aid (0.581) Famine Relief..	Recall
2.	The process of charity fu... to... (0.345) fund... (0.989) charity funds (0.650) fund-raising (1.444)	Recall
3.	Today most ee... (1.898) fund organisations depend..	Recall
4.	Before Diana cuts back her mm... (1.150) fund-raising	Recall
5.	Of mil landmines e... (0.530)	Recall

6.	She had supported e... for about 100 hospitals ee... charity fund...	Recall
7.	Wilderness e... protection	Recall

All of the problems here are the result of instability in learning. Because the student had just learned a set of structures, expressions, and vocabulary items then were asked to use them, they made these mistakes. We can see how the student failed to remember the idiomatic phrase 'live famine relief concert' in (1), had difficulty remembering 'fund-raising' (in 2,3, and 4), the word 'landmines' (in 5), 'charity' (in 6), and the expression 'wilderness protection' (in 7). The teacher needs to reinforce these terms and give students further tasks that require their use so that they can achieve long-term learning.

In a traditional teaching context, the ESL teacher will have little chance to get students to use specific terms. They will have simply taught structures, idiomatic expressions, and vocabulary items and gave their students controlled exercises that required the artificial use of the new items. If they do the exercise well, the teacher will consider learning to have been achieved. In SI, on the other hand, teachers provide their class with natural contexts that require use of the very items they are teaching. So the students have little chance but to use these items in a natural context. This will reinforce how the items are expected to be used. If students make mistakes, or if they have hesitations and false starts, the teacher will immediately know that further practice is needed. Notice how little error avoidance the student above practised; that is entirely because of the practice in context that they did in class. Simultaneous interpretation, therefore, is an excellent tool for converting passive into active knowledge and for circumventing error avoidance.

Conclusion

The SI technique is unequivocally capable of delivering better fluency. We can safely conclude that translation from the native language contributes positively to the development of oral fluency.

SI allows teachers to explain a set of structures, idiomatic expressions, and vocabulary items at the beginning of a class period. Then it facilitates for students to listen to a piece of discourse in their native language where the equivalents of the taught items are used in a natural context. Students are then expected to spend the bulk of the class period using the taught English structures, expressions, and vocabulary to retell the native language piece of discourse. Thus, the SI method allows students to see how the new English concepts and structures are communicated in their native language, and at the same time it requires that they re-communicate the message into English. By necessity, they have to use the just-taught English structures, idiomatic expressions, and vocabulary items to communicate the new concepts but only after they have learned how they are expressed in their native language. This way, SI ensures that students will not make false hypotheses about how the new English concepts fit into their own conceptual world.

In the process of drilling on rendering the native language discourse into English, students learn to use the new concepts and structures and they develop a feel for the context in which the concepts are used. The drilling is rehearsal and rehearsal is essential, cognitive psychologists assert, for the transfer of information from the working memory to the long term memory. Learning is immediate; therefore, we should place more faith in the facilitative role of L1.

References

Bousfield, W.A. (1953). "The Occurrence of Clustering in the Recall of Randomly Arranged Associates". *Journal of General Psychology*, 49, 229-240.

Bresnihan, Brian and Barbara Stoops. (1996). "Three Ways that Work: Oral Fluency Practice in the EFL Classroom" . *English Teaching Forum*, 34(3-4), 30-37.

Brown, Robert Sanborn and Paul Nation. (1997). "Teaching Speaking: Suggestions for the Classroom". *The Language Teacher Online*, 21(1), 1-7.

Caramazza, A. And I. Broanes. (1980). "Semantic Classification by Bilinguals". *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 34, 77-81.

Catford, J.C. (1965). *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Channell, Joanna. (1988). "Psycholinguistic Considerations in the Study of L2 Vocabulary Acquisition". In Ronald Carter and Michael McCarthy (Ed.), *Vocabulary and Language Teaching* (Pp. 83-96). London & New York: Longman.

Chen, H.C. and M.L. Ng. (1989). "Semantic Facilitation and Translation Priming Effects in Chinese-English Bilinguals". *Memory and Cognition*, 17, 454-462.

Cristoffanini, P.K. Krisner and D. Milech. (1986). "Bilingual Lexical Representation: The Status of Spanish-English Cognates". *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 38A, 367-393.

De Groot, Annette M.B. and Gerard L.J. Nas. (1991). "Lexical Representation of Cognates and Noncognates in Compound Bilinguals". *Journal of Memory and Language*, 30, 90-123.

Deese, J. (1959). "Influence of Inter-Item Associative Strength upon Immediate Free Recall". *Psychological Reports*, 5, 305-312.

Grace, George. (1987). *The Linguistic Construction of Reality*. London: Croom Helm Publishers, Ltd.

Jenkins, J.J., and W.A. Russell. (1952). "Associative Clusterin During Recall". *Journal of Abnormal and Social psychology*, 47, 818-821.

Jenkins, J.J., W.D. Mink, and W.A. Russell. (1958). "Associative Clustering as a Function of Verbal Association Strength". *Psychological Report*, 4, 127-136.

Jin, Y.S. and I. Fischler. (1987). "Effects of Concreteness on Cross-Language Priming of Lexical Decision". Paper presented at the Southeastern Psychological Association Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia.

Pawley, Andrew K. (1985). "Speech Formulas and Linguistic Competence". *Lenguas Modernas*, 12, 80-104.

Pawley, Andrew K. (1991). "Saying Thinkgs in Kalam: Reflections on Language and Translation". In Andrew K. Pawley (Ed.), *Man and a Half: Essays in Pacific Antrhopology and Ethnobiology in Honour of Ralph Bulmer*. Auckland, New Zealand: The Polynesian Society.

Post, Ron and Ilyse Rathet. (1996). "On Their Own Terms: Using Student Native Culture as Content in EFL Classroom". *English Teaching Forum*, 34 (3-4), 12-17.

Potter, Mary C. Kwok-Fai So, Barbara Von Eckardt, and Laurie B. Feldman. (1984). "Lexical and Conceptual Representation in Beginning and Proficient Bilinguals". *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour*, 23, 23-38.

Reis, Luis Augusto V.P. (1996). "The Myths and the Practical Needs of Using L1 in EFL Classes: A Learner Training Experiment". *English Teaching Forum*, 34 (3-4), 61-62.

Schwanenflugel, Paula J. And Mario Rey. (1986). "Interlingual Semantic Facilitation: Evidence for a Common Representational System in the Bilingual Lexicon". *Journal of Memory and Language*, 25, 605-618.

Serrano-Sanchez, R.M. (1996). "Oral Practice for Large Upper Intermediate or Advanced Groups". *English Teaching Forum*, 34(3-4), 95-97.

Smith, Craig. (1995). "College Conversation Classes: Beyond Survival". *The Internet TESL Journal*, 1(2), 1-4).

Washburn, Nancy and Kiel Christianson. 1996. "Teaching Conversation Strategies Through Pair-Taping". *The Internet TESL Journal*, 2(3),1-11.

Weschler, Robert. (1997). "Uses of Japanese (L1) in the English Classroom: Introducing the Functional-Translation Method". *The Internet TESL Journal*, 3(2), 1-11.

Yaghi, H.M. (1994). A Psycholinguistic Model for Simultaneous Translation, and Proficiency Assessment by Automated Acoustic Analysis of Discourse. Unpublished thesis, Auckland University.

Penpals to Keypals:
Japanese Learners Help Arab Students to Learn English

HAL HENNIGAN
Higher Colleges of Technology

This is a straightforward chronological account of an on-going classroom project, spanning one academic year of two semesters. It is offered in the hope that it may be of benefit to practising teachers who are interested in Penpal or Keypal projects.

My first attempt at this project was back in 1993. I was teaching at a tertiary women's college in Abu Dhabi when I contacted a friend teaching in a Japanese women's university with a view to setting up a penpal liason. I was interested in using penpal exchanges for writing practice, in the belief that a genuinely communicative task increases student motivation. As my students were young Emirati women, I looked for an appropriate institution to exchange letters with, lest there be any problems with personal inhibition or parental disapproval. Correspondence with young men was clearly inappropriate and women's colleges have become increasingly rare in western countries. Japan offered the similarity of a strong cultural identity which retains characteristics of formal, hierarchical social structure and where single-sex colleges are common.

There are, of course, valid arguments for putting learners in touch only with native speakers who will provide models of accuracy and fluency. However, I think in the Arabian situation the motivational and social considerations outweigh possible linguistic or pedagogic reservations.

Our first efforts were reasonably successful in that the students participated enthusiastically and tackled the writing tasks willingly. The big problem with snail-mail, however, is that it's aptly nicknamed. With the best will in the world, minimum turnaround time for letters had to be three weeks: a week in the post to Japan, a week for the Japanese students to reply and another week in transit back to Abu Dhabi. This delay was demotivating; the students tended to lose interest and, at the end of the year, the project lapsed. When electronic mail recently became available to my students I saw it as a possible answer to this problem and reactivated the project.

There is another problem with corresponding with a Japanese college: their academic calendar is quite different from ours in the Gulf. The winter term in Japan usually runs from about late September to mid-January. There is then a long break until mid-April when students return until July. To find information about term-times in various countries, see the listing at:

http://www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/people/teacher/trobb/terms.html

The rationale behind a keypal project may be summarised through the following objectives:

Academic:

Give students the opportunity to develop Reading/Writing skills through a genuinely communicative exercise;

Learn or practise the conventions of letter writing;

Practise word-processing skills;

Learn how to use e-mail.

Social:

Encourage students to think about their place in the world and articulate their identity;

Broaden their world view.

The First Step

The class which I was working with was a first semester Foundations group, all of whom had just left school. It was clearly unwise to make general assumptions about their abilities or attitudes as they came from varied backgrounds and schools.

Therefore, I decided to begin with the obvious. We started with a bit of brainstorming which for some of them was a new technique and which couldn't be taken for granted - spider or cluster diagrams included.

I started by explaining the concept of brainstorming: producing lots of ideas, however zany, without passing judgement. Then I elicited from the class what kinds of things they thought of in relation to a country, e.g. food, scenery, music, people's appearance, currency, cities, movies, weather, cars, religion, colours, smells.

The class was the divided into groups of four and we practised brainstorming America. In each group, one or two of the quickest writers noted down the ideas or images which came into their several heads on hearing the word "America" or "USA". These secretaries had to be reassured that no attention whatever was to be paid to grammar or spelling. After five minutes of this, a representative of each group reported in turn to the class as a whole while the teacher recorded their items on a flipchart, noting with an asterisk the points mentioned by more than one group. Results were fairly predictable with Hollywood and President Clinton at the top of the recognition league but there were some surprises. One of the fun things about this activity is that it offers an outlet for esoteric and bizarre bits of information the students have picked up.

Brainstorm Japan

The next step was to try it on Japan. Again each group reported and their ideas were noted down and subsequently collated and categorised to some extent. It was interesting to find that the images of Japan which my Arabian students came up with were quite wide-ranging.

island *
Pacific
Asia *
Tokyo**

Prince Narahito
Princess Masuko
President Hashimoto

independent country
Yen *
Cold & rainy *

earthquake**
volcano

agriculture
electronic things
technology

Hiroshima**
Nagasaki*
Atomic bomb

short size
black hair
soft hair
small eyes

tradition
kimono
wooden shoes
Sumo
highly educated

Ninja
Kung Fu
Karate
Judo
Yoga
high buildings
wooden houses

Japanese language
alphabet- 2000 letters
wooden pen
work hard

football
baseball

fast train

spaghetti (noodles)
rice
soya sauce
seafood
Japanese food
Chinese food

no army
Buddhist*

Toyota
Honda
Sony

(*The asterisks indicate that more than one group had thought of that item.)

The results of our brainstorm were sent to Japan by e-mail. Simultaneously, the Japanese students were invited to do a similar exercise on Arabia. However "Arabia" proved too remote a concept and "The Middle East" was offered instead. This allowed the intrusion of some political and social perceptions which reflected the news coverage of events well removed from the Arabian peninsula.

Brainstorm Middle East

Desert (4)
Oil (4)

Arabian Nights (2)
War (2)

Islam (3)
Camel (2)
Not rich (2)
Hard place to live (2)
Dangerous (2)
Not safe (2)

Pres. Hussain (3)
Hot (2)
Arabian letters
- ?alphabet (2)

Religion
Cheap
Unimportant country
Slaves
Bad public peace
Crime
Persia Bay (?Gulf)
River Euphrates
Electric products

Mysterious
Many people come to Japan
Bad food
Strict
Guerrillas

Soccer
River Tigris

One husband,many wives
Muslims
Palaces
Mohammed
Heart is pure

Women hide face

Big eyes
Long eyelashes
Strange clothes
Unhappy

Beards
Black hair
Clearcut face

Clearly, many of the perceptions of the "Middle East" were very negative. Although offended by the text as presented, my students accepted that the Japanese girls were ill-informed rather than ill-intentioned; the Arab girls accepted the challenge and became determined to put the record straight. To me it indicated that our students were perhaps less culturally insular than were the Japanese.

The next step was to split into groups, each of which would address one of the questions the Japanese girls had sent.

The questions were given out by lot to each group although I did feel a little uneasiness here. I realised it might have been more prudent to have stage-managed the allocation of questions to some extent. The query on the Gulf War went to a group containing a student with strong views, which she vehemently articulated, on the United Nations role in Iraq. However, a reasonable answer was formulated.

The girls did set out to counter what they saw as the ignorance of the Japanese students. They weren't reticent about extolling the joys and benefits of life in the UAE.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What are the good things in your country?

We have a wise leader (His Highness Shaikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan)
We have oil , we are very rich
We have many places for tourists
Safe country
Helpful and friendly country
Delicious food like rice
National people have one religion (Islam) but other religions are accepted
    - e.g. there are Christian churches
Good at sports, especially in football
High standard of education
Clean country
U A E gives development aid to poorer countries
Good system of law

What are the bad things in your country?

Hot weather
We have many foreign people in our country
- only one third of population is National

What do you eat every day?

Traditional food
    - Rice (Machboose - made with yellow rice and tomatoes, Biriyani)
    - fish, duck, chicken, meat (goat , camel, cow)
    - Hareese
    - Fresh eggs
    - Dates / salonah / salad / soup

Drinks
    - tea, coffee
    - all kinds of juice
    - milk (camel, goat, cow)

Fast food
    - KFC
    - Pizza Hut
    - McDonalds
    - Baskin Robbins
    - Wimpey

    Pizza Haven
    Pizza Inn
    Burger King
    Burger Queen

All kinds of restaurants (Japanese, Chinese, Italian etc.)

What are the current fashions among young people?

Music
- Arabic music
- English "
- Indian "
- Pop (Rock & Roll)
- R & B
- American

Entertainment
- video games
- watching TV
- skating (ice)
- computers
- cinema
- parks
- sand skiing
- horse races / camel races
- golf
- football
- volleyball
- tennis
- power boats (Victory team)
- water skiing

Clothes
- Dishdasha (men's white robe)
- Abaya (woman's black cloak)
- Shayla (woman's head cover)
- skirt, blouse, trousers, jacket
- Western style clothes of high quality like G.Versace, Valentino, CD, Chanel, YSL, Cartier, Nina Rici, Dior

make-up and perfumes

Gold accessories

How did you feel when the gulf war (Kuwait – Iraq) happened?

It was far from our country but it was close to our hearts.

All of the men (old, youth, teenagers) joined the Army, Air Force, Civil Defence

Also the women and girls took a part by taking a first aid course

Our country took a part by defending Kuwait

The Arab countries felt sympathy with Kuwait.

In our culture it is not allowed that two Muslim countries fight with each other or to kill anybody, even non-Muslim, without good reason.

UN orders are unfair on the Iraqi people. There are thousands of children dying every day because of the loss of food and medical care. They are blaming the people for something they didn't do - it was the President.

Questions for the Japanese students

As well as answering the questions put to them by the Japanese, our students drew up their own questions. They worked in groups, each group producing one question (although one group insisted on two). A certain tetchiness may be discerned.

1. Why don't you know more about Arab countries? Do you not study Geography and History? Why don't you try to get the right ideas about us?
2. Do you have serious problems about drugs and AIDS in society? If you do, why?
3. What is your opinion about the chemical bomb in your train stations?
4. Will you not be bored spending all your life in one job?
5. How can your country solve the problem of population? (extra question)

They had also had some cultural input from Headway Upper Intermediate Tapescript 5, a listening exercise which we had done in regular class work. It certainly reinforces the stereotype of a hard-working, formal and static society.

We had also received input and encouragement from the Japanese embassy and community in Abu Dhabi. Some Japanese ladies visited the college, answered the students' questions and demonstrated how to put on the Kimono and how to make Origami. The students really enjoyed this. Also, they visited a Japanese festival at Abu Dhabi's Cultural Foundation where music, food and festivity helped to cement a relationship. Through these activities we also learned that Japan is Abu Dhabi's best customer for oil and that the mutual trade links are extensive and important.

Letters

We then moved on to the next stage, the exchange of letters. The Japanese girls sent elaborate and quite personal letters which were often highly decorated.

The letters from UAE to Japan were more detached in tone and still tended to extol the wonders of Abu Dhabi rather than give much personal information.

It was also noticeable that when the first letters arrived, they were seen as from real people, and the earlier sense of grievance towards the Japanese students because of their perceptions rapidly evaporated.

Also, of course, while the Japanese girls had no hesitation about sending their photos, the Arab girls generally would not.

It should be remembered that snailmail needn't be confined to the exchange of letters. Students are usually delighted to send postcards, maps and suchlike. Another idea is to exchange audio tapes. Many of our girls would be reluctant to put their voices on tape and send them out into the wider world but there are other possibilities.

What about making a tape with characteristic sounds of the Emirates? You could have birdsong lilting above the lapsing of the sea. The calls to prayer are certainly evocative of the region. There's also lots of Arab music to choose from. Or how about the Abu Dhabi traffic symphony with its dominant taxi horn section backed by percussion from the building sites? Another idea could be a simple Arabic language lesson prepared by the students and using English for the rubric. This would give students at least some idea of the sound of each other's language.

Technology

With the exchange of letters the abiding deficiency of snailmail - its slowness - became again apparent. It's not easy for students to maintain enthusiasm with a 3-4 week turnaround time for letters.

It was time to explore e-mail. However, we encountered an unanticipated problem with Japanese universities: they can be technologically backward. While it is a stated fact that 75% of Japan's youth goes on to tertiary education, it isn't necessarily at an advanced institution. Many institutions which call themselves universities are actually small private colleges offering a very limited curriculum with very limited resources. Contrary to what we might expect, many Japanese students don't have the opportunity to become familiar with information technology. Japanese colleges vary widely; some are extremely advanced technologically but many others just don't have the resources to allow their students to use e-mail.

Once we do go on the Internet, we find no shortage of information and contacts. As an example of a site which offers information about Japan, we have the Japan Information Network:

http://jin.jcic.or.jp
OR
http://www.jinjapan.org

Also, anybody seeking keypals doesn't have to look very far. One very useful site is St Olaf College in USA which produces mailing lists where teachers around the world can find classes to correspond with:

http://www.stolaf.edu/network/iecc/

There are also many students or class websites which may be visited.

When we decided to go to e-mail for the next stage, we had to choose a program. Hotmail was considered but we've settled on Yahoo e-mail. Registering is in itself a complicated process and of course the students must have the conditions of service explained to them before they agree to accept them. As an initial exercise, students' addresses were distributed at random amongst themselves so that they could practice sending and receiving messages with their classmates. The next step was exchanging messages with students in another UAE college. After that, the idea is that they will be comfortable enough with the technology to correspond easily with their contacts in Japan. But one problem with making contact with other Arab students was the prevalence of Chatline jargon with abbreviations, lack of punctuation and grisly spelling which, despite communicative authenticity, really are not acceptable in a language learning context.

I had to make contact with a different college in Japan because of the technology shortfall with our previous partner; liason was established by advertising on the Net. Incidentally, the newly encountered Japanese students have their own website which I hadn't properly explored before agreeing on an exchange. When I did explore it, I was somewhat taken aback; the topics under discussion with the world included changing views of marriage, abortion and schoolgirl prostitution in Japan. ("Do you have this problem in your country?") However, I decided the best way to deal with that was to tell my students that they might find the website a bit shocking but to remember that these girls lived in a different culture. After all, there's far more outrageous stuff out there on the Net and surely our job is to equip our students to deal with the world, not try to insulate them from it. After making contact, I had my students work in groups of three or four, cooperation making the task less stressful. In each group all the students wrote a biographical paragraph and then a supplementary paragraph on a topic such as UAE weather, food, tradition or the College. The topics were intended to be complementary. The first drafts were handwritten and I corrected them. Then the corrected drafts were word processed on e-mail and the students were instructed to Save the Drafts and forward a copy to me. In the event, most of them needed further correction at this point. When an acceptable level of accuracy had been achieved, I forwarded the letters to the professor in Japan and she distributed them to her students. The Japanese girls could then reply directly to my students. At present, we are exchanging letters which concentrate on transmitting information, and the interest level remains very high. As well as the e-mail exchanges, my students have discovered their correspondents' website but so far it hasn't provoked any protestations of horror.

Conclusion

As stated earlier, the original impetus for the project was mainly motivational; it involved genuinely communicative and purposeful tasks and so might be expected to engage the students' enthusiasm. Given that my students were young Arab women, Gulf nationals, many of whom were socially restricted, the opportunity to go outside the confines of the classroom was especially welcome. Judging from the students' enthusiasm for the project it appears to have succeeded in regard to motivation, but other things too became apparent along the way. We've learned as we've gone along.

One aspect of the activity is that it becomes progressively more learner-driven through the demands of authentic communication between the participants at either end of the line. The teacher may have originally devised the agenda, set up the project and allocated tasks common to all members of the group but this necessarily gives way to the more individual requirements of responding to the person at the other end of the line. From probably rather formulaic beginnings, the correspondents share information about their experience and feelings. Penpals ask each other questions and give answers. Passing beyond the clear direction of the early stages, the teacher's role becomes less interventionist, supplying guidance as it is needed. The ultimate stage is that the students continue the activity themselves when the teacher has left the room at semester's end. Thus there is a contribution to learner independence.

There can be problems of coordination also. As the work becomes more individual, the hares in any group will work rapidly through the tasks and finish early. Short back-up Internet-based tasks should be made available e.g. noting the day's headlines from a newspaper on the net and summarising them. A more advanced task could be to compare and contrast the headlines in two newspapers. Tasks such as these will enable the tortoises to catch up without missing out on anything vital.

A question arises: is e-mail a true writing medium? Is it not perhaps a written expression of what is essentially spoken English? Is it then a suitable medium for teaching writing skills? Chatline conversations certainly seem to have more in common with spoken than written discourse. In my project, I maintained a measure of control over the language produced by requiring that the first draft of an outgoing message be forwarded to me first. If I considered it to be grammatically unacceptable I wrote my correction symbols on a hard copy and returned it to the student. She could then make repairs to the text before despatch to her penpal. Adhering to the usual procedures for a writing task helps the student to develop her writing skill.

Incoming messages were also to be forwarded to me in order to monitor progress, at least in the early stages. This also provided a back-up in case a student inadvertently deleted a message.

A better route perhaps is for students to word process their work on Word and submit hard copies to the teacher for checking. The corrected product may then be transcribed onto e-mail or transmitted as an attachment. However, attachments are not universally welcomed on e-mail as they may carry a virus.

Finally, using English as the sole medium of communication between two disparate L1 communities exemplifies the role of English as a World Language. It mirrors the situation in the United Arab Emirates where, despite the pre-eminence of Arabic, English serves as a *lingua franca*; thus the project has relevance to the world of work which is our students' destination.

Is it worth it? A project like this is time-consuming, frequently messy and sometimes frustrating. Because the students themselves are creating authentic texts and carrying out authentic tasks, things are bound to be fluid and occasionally chaotic. However, despite the difficulties encountered, the participants have enjoyed it, believe themselves to have learned from it and would cheerfully do it again.

References

Eastment, D. (1996a) "The Internet for teachers and learners" *Modern English Teacher* Vol.5 No.2.

Eastment, D (1996) *The Internet and ELT* English 2000, British Council .

Jarvis, Huw (1997) "Using the World Wide Web for an 'authentic learning experience' *Modern English Teacher* Vol.6 No.4.

Robb, Thomas N.(1996) "E-Mail Keypals for Language Fluency".
http://www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/people/teacher/trobb/keypals.html
This article originally appeared in *Foreign Language Notes* Vol.38, No.3 pp 8-10

Slaouti, Diane (1998) "Motivating learners how to write: a role for e-mail" *Call Review* IATEFL Computer SIG, January 1998.

Useful sites

EFL Links - For ESL/EFL Students (I-TESL-J)
http://www.aitech.ac.jp/
includes section on 'Penpals, E-mail and Communicating with Others'

Intercultural E-Mail Classroom Connections
http://www.stolaf.edu/network/iecc/

Japan Information Network
http://jin.jcic.or.jp
OR
http://www.jinjapan.org

Japan Insight - a View from Within
http://jin.jcic.or.jp/insight
OR
http://www.jinjapan.org/insight

Do Learners Really Benefit from Resource Centres?

IAN HARRISON
Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Introduction

One of the most significant changes in language education in recent years has been an increasing focus on the development of learning strategies as a curriculum tool – see, for example, Dickinson & Carver (1980), Dickinson (1987), Wenden & Rubin (1987), Willing (1988 & 1989), Nunan (1989), Sinclair & Ellis (1989), O'Malley & Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990), Wenden (1991). This has been paralleled by moves towards greater learner autonomy – one result of which has been the worldwide development of learning resource centres set up to help learners make choices in their learning. However, until recently there has been little discussion in the literature of problems and issues emerging from the development and operation of such centres. It is thus encouraging that Hoadley *et al.* (1990), Sheerin (1991), Miller & Rogerson-Revell (1993) Miller & Gardener (1994), Star (1994) and Nunan & Lamb (1995) all emphasise the need for evaluative research studies in self-access language learning.

The title of this paper might be seen as provocatively casting doubt on the not inconsiderable investment in learning centres that has been made over the last decade or so. However, such an interpretation would be to miss the point that there is as yet insufficient evidence to state with certainty whether or not learners do actually benefit from such investment. The main aim of this paper is thus to emphasise the need for teachers and administrators to obtain research data which will help to throw light on a number of issues and to highlight deficiencies and strengths in terms of materials, resources and staffing.

Curriculum Context

The study focusses on the renewal of the curriculum and the development of the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) at Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages (KIFL), Tokyo, Japan that took place between 1992 and 1997. I thus describe a narrow clientele but feel that the issues that emerge from our study are of more general interest.

As described elsewhere, (Candlin, Harrison & Mont 1997, Harrison, 1992) the management model adopted for the renewal was a collaborative one, involving the establishment of a number of research teams - "focus groups" - each with a clearly defined statement of purpose and set of goals and outcomes. The aim of such a framework was to create a solid foundation for the curriculum innovation by combining the knowledge and experience of the faculty and administration with an increasing awareness of current research in a number of different areas. Of relevance to the current study is one of the outcomes of the Curriculum Aims, Goals and Objectives team - a set of curriculum aims which included:

> "to promulgate the idea that language learning is a lifelong process and to equip the learner with the strategies needed to develop as an independent learner in the world beyond KIFL." (KIFL Mission Statement.)

This team also developed curriculum goals relating to learner autonomy such as "to encourage independence and life long learning; to develop strategies for self-assessment". These goals were refined further into competencies –

> "Can apply specific strategies that assist learning/studying (assessment criteria: compares and evaluates strategies, stating effectiveness; describes, discusses and analyses personal strategy preferences)
>
> Can use strategies for self-assessment
> (assessment criteria: describes, discusses and analyses strategies used)
>
> Can monitor and evaluate personal performance
> (assessment criteria: evaluates, discusses and analyses progress and/or errors)" (Mont *et al.*,1993)

The research team charged with developing a resources policy to further the aims and objectives of the Kanda Curriculum Project took the view that any learning centre should sit philosophically at the heart of the overall curriculum, providing opportunities for learners to develop both language skills and strategies for learning. It was felt that the development of the centre should not occur in isolation from the other components of the curriculum without regard to the learners' expectations and experiences in these other areas. During this development phase (1992-1994) the facility also changed name from resource to self-access to independent learning centre, since it was felt that this last name best reflected the aims and objectives of the curriculum as a whole.

The Operation of the KIFL Independent Learning Centre (ILC)

Autonomous learning implies the ability to make choices about what, how and when to study. In common with other such centres, therefore, the main goal of the KIFL ILC is to improve the ability of the students to make these choices. In this section I examine briefly the way the centre tries to achieve the aim of helping students make informed choices about their learning.

Students enter KIFL after twelve years of education in a system where it is generally accepted that the teacher knows what the students need to learn. The pressure to conform in a supposedly homogenous group is very strong. On entering KIFL, however, it is expected that learners take an increasing responsibility for their own learning but is understood that this metamorphosis cannot happen overnight. In the ILC the gradual process begins with an orientation phase where the students work through a series of tasks which focus attention on the available resources and on their own learning needs. This can be momentous since only rarely have the learners actually thought about such needs; although they may have listened to a text in order to understand the gist, this is probably the first time they have been asked to think about what they actually do. The aim of the orientation tasks, by making the learner consider the choices available, and of the next phase, where he or she has to actually start making choices, is to help the learner gradually take on more responsibility for his or her own learning.

The next stage of the process introduces the students to the concept of time management - it is only the exceptional student who is a good time manager. The learner focusses on a study plan and on the time allocation for carrying out this plan - the computer database gives the estimated time that it will take students to complete individual tasksheets. Students are asked to decide on a series of tasks that will last a designated period of time. The aim is to develop a skill that is useful for the learner both as a student and as a future employee.

The next step is the completion of a learning contract which the student presents to a tutor who discusses the choices that have been made and makes suggestions for improvement. Once all negotiations are complete, the contract is signed and the learner undertakes the course of study agreed upon. After completing each task, the learner is asked to note how long each task took; these times are monitored to help determine whether discrepancies indicate a problem with either the task or the student. In addition, the student completes a "student record sheet' which provides an opportunity for student comment on the tasksheet.

Various mechanisms were thus set in place that would hopefully all help the learner along the path to independence. The extent to which these hopes were realised is explored in the next section.

The Research Study

Research Questions

Three research questions were formulated:

Does the experience of negotiating, renegotiating and completing a learning contract in the (KIFL) Independent Learning Centre lead to:

1. an increase in the learners' ability to formulate objectives?
2. an increase in the learners' ability to choose tasks which match objectives?
3. an increase in the learners' awareness of the learning process?

Data Collection

The study involved 116 first year students – about 8% of the total student intake. The practical difficulties involved in obtaining a stratified sample of individual students resulted in six classes being selected for the study. On entering KIFL, students sit a standardised test of English language proficiency and are then assigned to classes according to their results. Classes are thus broadly homogeneous in terms of language proficiency. The six classes used in the study were representative of the range of classes in the institution and the sample of students can thus also be said to be representative.

Questions 1 and 2 above were addressed by examining learning contracts and the learning tasks chosen to complete these contracts at two moments in time. First, during the first few weeks of the students' first semester – after they had followed the orientation to the centre and when they at least knew what was expected of them. Contracts and tasks were then examined a second time a few weeks before the end of the students' first year at KIFL.

For Question 1 the precision of objectives that the student had formulated on his or her contract was rated on a scale from 1 ("extremely precise and measurable") to 5 ("vague and immeasurable"). For Question 2 the match between task and objective was rated, again on a 1 to 5 point scale, from "exact/perfect match between objectives and task" to "no match between objective and task".

The instrument used to measure any changes in the students' awareness of the learning process was an adapted version of the Learning Style Inventory described in Kolb (1981) (See Appendix A). This inventory provides a general idea of how students view themselves as learners and was administered, in Japanese, at the beginning of Semester 1 and at the end of Semester 2. The scores obtained by the students at each of these moments were then used to calculate first the learning modes (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation) that students were most comfortable with, and secondly their preferred learning styles (accommodator, diverger, assimilator, converger – see Appendix for explanation of these terms). Changes in learning style were identified as was the number of students who had developed a balance of learning styles.

Data Analysis

Table 1 outlines the results obtained by an analysis of the objectives formulated by the students.

TABLE 1
Rating of student objectives

Beginning of Semester 1			End of Semester 2		
Rating	No.	%	Rating	No.	%
1 (precise)	0	0	1 (precise)	2	1.7
2	2	1.7	2	9	7.8
3	13	11.2	3	15	12.9
4	35	30.2	4	26	22.4
5 (immeasurable)	66	56.9	5 (immeasurable)	64	55.2

(n = 116)

Looking first at the results obtained at the beginning of Semester 1 for Question 1, there is little that is surprising. No student was judged capable of formulating precise learning objectives and most produced what were considered to be vague and immeasurable objectives. Such objectives included "Listening"; "Vocabulary"; "Grammar"; "Test Preparation"; "I'd like to study English". Given the lack of training in the formulation of their own learning objectives in their high school years, it is almost surprising that as many as 12.9% of the students produced objectives that were rated in the middle of the scale or

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

higher. ("To improve my listening comprehension by watching movies."; "To get better at Simple Past when I am writing stories.")

When the results obtained at the end of Semester 2 are examined, it can be seen there has been a slight upward shift – 22.4% of the students were rated in the middle or higher on the five point scale, as compared with 12.9% in Semester 1. Two students (1.7%) could now formulate precise objectives for their own learning (0% in Semester 1). Objectives now included: "I'd like to learn about overseas places by reading travel magazines and watching videos."; "I am weak at Simple Past and Present Perfect. I want to improve.". However, the percentage of students formulating objectives that were vague or immeasurable was more or the less the same in each semester (56.9% and 55.2%). Students still wrote objectives such as "I want to learn English." Or "listening to songs" – although this was perhaps slightly better than the earlier "listening". Over half the sample population therefore, seem not to have benefited from either their experience in the ILC or from the learner training that went on in the mainstream curriculum - training which aimed to help students become more responsible for their own learning. Rather worrying!

Table 2 outlines the results obtained for the second research question.

TABLE 2
Rating of the match between objectives and chosen tasks

Beginning of Semester 1			End of Semester 2		
Rating	No.	%	Rating	No.	%
1 (perfect match)	0	0	1 (perfect match)	7	6.0
2	2	1.7	2	15	12.9
3	7	6.0	3	33	28.4
4	29	25.0	4	35	30.2
5 (no match)	78	67.2	5 (no match)	26	22.4

(n = 116)

In contrast to the lack of improvement in the formulation of objectives, students became better at choosing tasks that would help them to achieve their objectives. At the beginning of the year, no student could decide on appropriate learning tasks for their learning contract – again this may not be particularly surprising given the lack of training in the schools. By the end of the year 6% could do so and 47.3% were rated in the middle of the scale or higher (7.7% at the beginning of the year). At the beginning of the year 67.2% of the students chose tasks that did not match their stated objectives in any way. This included such extremes as choosing reading tasks to improve listening, vocabulary tasks to develop grammar. By the end of the year this percentage had dropped to 22.4% - admittedly still quite high.

It is difficult to determine with any certainty what factor or combination of factors was responsible for the students' increased ability to choose appropriate tasks. The fact that learners by the end of the year were more familiar with the ILC and what it had to offer may have helped, or it may have been that the learners were now more familiar with the concepts and metalanguage used. The help and guidance of ILC tutors, as well as that of teachers in the classroom would also hopefully have been a contributing factor.

The third research question concerning learning styles proved more problematic to analyse. I started off by calculating the number of students in each learning style category at each of same the two moments in time used for Questions 1 and 2 (Table 3).

TABLE 3
Changes in learning style

Beginning of Semester 1		End of Semester 2	
Learning Style	No.	Learning Style	No.
Accommodator	31	Accommodator	54
Diverger	49	Diverger	54
Converger	28	Converger	0
Assimilator	8	Assimilator	8

n = 116

I decided, however, that this did not really reveal very much. For example, the fact that 31 students fell into the Accommodator category at the beginning of Semester 1, as compared with 54 at the end of Semester 2 does not tell us much although this change, as with the other changes illustrated in Table 3 may possibly indicate that students have become aware of different modes of learning and that they are experimenting with these. So, given that one of the underlying aims of completing the learning styles inventory is to help learners develop their learning skills in each of the four learning styles, I decided to analyse how many students had adopted a balance of learning styles. This was also based on the assumption that a learner should not rely too heavily on any one particular learning style but should be open to other ways of learning.

I discovered that at the beginning of Semester 1, 46 students had a balance of learning styles (39.7%). At the end of Semester 2, 68 students or 58.6% had indicated that they favoured a variety of styles rather than relying on one major learning style. Factors contributing to this change may have been the fact they were exposed to other ways of learning both in the ILC and in the classroom, through the influence of the underlying philosophical approaches to the curriculum, of teachers, and of the instructional materials.

Implications

This section outlines and comments on implications arising out of the study. Many of these implications overlap and intersect with one another – as might be expected in an area of learning which is so complex.

1. Learners – even adult learners - cannot be left to their own devices in a resource centre. The study confirms that orientation and learner training are crucial to the success of such a centre. Students need to become aware, for example, of what constitutes a precise objective. They need to be helped to become familiar with what

the centre has to offer in terms of technology, tasks, materials. Even the layout of the centre needs to be explained and explored.

2. ILC/Resource Centre personnel and teaching faculty need to be trained. It cannot be assumed that tutors or managers (and classroom teachers) will initially have the skills to help students formulate and negotiate a contract. Neither can it be assumed that they will have a knowledge of the theoretical underpinning of such a centre and how this translates into practical help for learners.

3. It cannot be assumed that all classroom teachers and Resource Centre tutors will know about learning strategies. Both teachers and tutors have to become aware of the need to develop these in students – and how to do this. They need to be become familiar with the kinds of materials and activities designed to develop learning strategies.

4. Students should be helped to analyse their own dominant learning style. They also need to become aware that there is more than one learning style and that they should develop skills that help them use a balance of styles. Faculty and tutors also need be made aware of the concept of different learning styles – and how to help students try out styles other than their own major one.

5. Students need to be helped to reflect upon and evaluate their own learning and to think of alternative ways of achieving their objectives. Such self-assessment is a learning strategy that is essential if the student is to move towards becoming an independent learner. Faculty and Resource Centre tutors need to recognise the importance of this and that they have to help their students develop the strategy.

6. There is a need for ongoing training – of learners and faculty – as students become more knowledgeable about what is on offer and what goals they need to achieve. Learners need to be helped to formulate new individual goals and objectives – and how best to achieve these.

7. It cannot be assumed that learners are acquiring learning strategies and becoming independent learners by working in a self-access centre, independent learning centre, or learning resource centre. The study indicates that this is not always necessarily the case. The need for ongoing evaluation and research is crucial to improvement of the whole experience offered to the learners.

Further Research

In this section I indicate what I feel were the shortcomings of the very limited research carried out and what are potentially useful and fruitful areas for further investigation.

1. There is a definite need for a longer term study since one year is very short and the actual amount of time spent by students in the ILC is very limited.

2. Something missing from the current study is a series of interviews with students – one purpose of which would be to discuss the findings of the initial research and to explore the issues further. A second purpose would also be to make students more aware of the concepts involved and of the need to develop learning strategies.

3. Further research should also include interviews with faculty in order to explore the issues raised by the research, and, as with the students, to raise their awareness of the concepts involved.

4. One of the problematic issues is the identification of those aspects of the curriculum which may have contributed to improvement or otherwise of, for example, the ability to match tasks with objectives. The use of an experimental and a control group may help to isolate these factors.

5. The current study does not throw light on whether or not the ILC helps students to become more efficient and more informed learners inside and outside the classroom.

6. It is unclear whether or not patterns of learning change over time as students become more aware of different modes and styles of learning. Further study is called for.

7. An ILC or Resource Centre is subversive. Can the ILC reveal and promote the heterogeneous nature of the learning clientele? Or does it in fact reinforce the tendency to homogenise the group by flattening out individual differences? The intention is to encourage the former, but what actually happens?

Conclusion

This study started out by attempting to find out whether or not learners became better learners as a result of their time spent in the Independent Learning Centre/Resource Centre. It also aimed to see if learners changed learning styles across time – again as a result of being exposed to a variety of learning styles and experiences. Some of the results indicate that yes, learners do definitely improve as learners. They can choose more appropriate study tasks that are more suited to the objective formulated. They also seem to be willing to try out new and different learning styles. However, I have not tried to quantify any improvement and the study is definitely limited in scope. Moreover, it is worrying that the students in the study do not seem to have improved their ability to formulate objectives. Despite this, the signs are generally positive.

But can I now look my former President in the eye and say, yes, the millions of yen spent on the Independent Learning Centre were definitely well spent? In terms of attracting students, certainly. It is a model centre, with faculty and administrators from other Japanese institutions coming to visit. I cannot say, however, that the money has been well spent in terms of students benefiting from the centre. But can any Centre Manager? The research findings are not yet there - intuition or anecdotal evidence are not sufficient. Without such findings, no faculty member or administrator can honestly say that the expenditure on resource centres is worthwhile. This is perhaps the key insight to emerge from the study.

References

Candlin, C. , Harrison, I., & Mont, M. (1996) Managing Curriculum Change. In G. van Troyer, C. Cornwell, & H. Morikawa (Eds) *On JALT 95: Curriculum and Evaluation*. Tokyo: The Japan Association for Language Teachers.

Dickinson, L., & Carver, D.J. (1980) Learning how to learn: steps towards self-direction in foreign language learning in schools. *English Language Teaching Journal, 35*, 1-7.

Dickinson, L. (1987) *Self-instruction in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harrison, I. (1992) *Collaborative Curriculum Renewal*. Paper presented at 1992 International JALT Conference, Tokyo, Japan.

Hoadley, J., Hulls, C., Mellor W., & Cox, E. (1990) *Adult Migrant Education Program: Review of Individual Learning Centres*. Melbourne: Technisearch Ltd.

Kolb, D. (1981) *Learning Style Inventory*. Boston: McBer & Co.

Miller, L. & Rogerson-Revell, P. (1993) Self-access systems. *ELT Journal* 47/3: 228-233.

Miller, L. & Gardener, D. (1994) Directions for Research into Self-Access Language Learning. In D. Gardener & L. Miller (Eds.) *Directions in Self-Access Language Learning* (pp.167-174). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Mission Statement, Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages, Tokyo, Japan.

Mont, M., Damm, B., Grimm, C., Hasegawa, M., & Simmons, D. (1993) Goals and Competencies for a Course in English for International Communication. Unpublished manuscript, Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages, Tokyo, Japan.

Nunan, D. (1989) *Understanding Language Classrooms*. London: Prentice Hall.

Nunan, D. & Lamb, C. (1995) *The Self-directed Teacher*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R. (1990) *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. New York: Newbury House.

O'Malley, J.M. & Chamot, A.U. (1990) *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. New York; Cambridge University Press.

Riley, P., Gremmo, M., & Moulden, H. (1989) Pulling yourself together: the practicalities of setting up and running self-access systems. In Little, D. (Ed.) *Self-access Systems for Language Learning*. Dublin: Authentik.

Sheerin, S. (1991) 'Self-access'. *Language Teaching* 24(3):143-157.

Sinclair, B. & Ellis, G. (1989) *Learning to Learn English: A course in learner training*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Star, M. (1994) Learning to Improve: Evaluating Self-Access Centres. In D. Gardener & L. Miller (eds.) *Directions in Self-Access Language Learning* (pp.157-166). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Wenden, A. (1991) *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy: planning and implementing learner training for language learners*. London: Prentice Hall.

Wenden, A. & Rubin, J. (1987) *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. London: Prentice Hall.

Willing, K. (1988) *Learning Styles in Adult Migrant Education*. Adelaide: National Curriculum Resource Centre.

Willing, K. (1989) *Teaching How to Learn: Learning Strategies in ESL*. Sydney: NCELTR, Macquarie University.

Appendix

Learning Styles Inventory

The following questionnaire is taken from Kolb (1981) but was administered in Japanese.

1.	When I learn:	I like to deal with my feelings.	I like to watch and listen.	I like to think about ideas.	I like to be doing things.
2.	I learn best when:	I trust my hunches and feelings.	I listen and watch carefully.	I rely on logical thinking.	I work hard to get things done.
3.	When I am learning:	I have strong feelings and reactions.	I am quiet and reserved.	I tend to reason things out.	I am responsible about things.
4.	I learn by:	Feeling.	Watching.	Thinking.	Doing.
5.	When I learn:	I am open to new experiences.	I look at all sides of issues.	I like to analyze things, break them down into their parts.	I like to try things out.

6.	When I am learning:	I am an intuitive person.	I am an observing person.	I am a logical person.	I am an active person.
7.	I learn best from:	Personal relationships.	Observation.	Rational theories.	A chance to try out and practice.
8.	When I learn:	I feel personally involved in things.	I take my time before acting.	I like ideas and theories.	I like to see results from my work.
9.	I learn best when:	I rely on my feelings.	I rely on my observations.	I rely on my ideas.	I can try things out for myself.
10.	When I am learning:	I am an accepting person.	I am a reserved person.	I am a rational person.	I am a responsible person.
11.	When I learn:	I get involved.	I like to observe.	I evaluate things.	I like to be active.
12.	I learn best when:	I am receptive and open-minded.	I am careful.	I analyze ideas.	I am practical.

The Four Learning Style Types

The following is taken directly from Kolb (1981):

The CONVERGER combines the learning steps of abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. People with this learning style are best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories. If this is your preferred learning style, you have the ability to solve problems and make decisions based on finding solutions to questions or problems. You would rather deal with technical tasks and problems than with social and interpersonal issues. These learning skills are important to be effective in specialist and technology careers.

The DIVERGER combines the learning steps of concrete experience and reflective observation. People with this learning style are best at viewing concrete situations from many different points of view. Their approach to situations is to observe rather than take action. If this is your style, you may enjoy situations that call for generating a wide range of ideas, as in a brainstorming session. You probably have broad cultural interests and like to gather information. This imaginative ability and sensitivity to feelings is needed for effectiveness in the arts, entertainment and service careers.

The ASSIMILATOR combines the learning steps of abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation. People with this learning style are best at understanding a wide range of information and putting it into concise, logical form. If this is your learning style, you probably are less focused on people and more interested in abstract ideas and concepts. Generally, people with this learning style find it more important that a theory have logical soundness than practical value. This learning style is important for effectiveness in information and science careers.

The ACCOMMODATOR combines the learning steps of concrete experience and active experimentation. People with this learning style have the ability to learn primarily from "hands-on" experience. If this is your style, you probably enjoy carrying out plans and involving yourself in new and challenging experiences. Your tendency may be to act on "gut" feelings rather than on logical analysis. In solving problems, you may reply more heavily on people for information than on your own technical analysis. This learning style is important for effectiveness in action-oriented careers such as marketing or sales.

A Learner-centered Approach to Assessing Listening Comprehension

CHRISTINE COOMBE & JON KINNEY
United Arab Emirates University

1.0 Introduction

To date, the idea of learner-centered approaches to assessment, particularly in the area of listening comprehension, have not been fully explored. Although the notion of learner-centeredness has been applied successfully to teaching practice (Campbell and Kryszewska 1992; Deller 1989), methodology (Nunan 1988; Tudor 1997), curriculum development (Nunan 1988), and learner-training (Wenden 1985; Wenden 1986; Wenden and Rubin 1987; Oxford 1990), little mention has been made of the possibility of applying learner-centered techniques in assessment. This is especially true in the area of listening assessment where the testing process itself may not reflect learner needs (Rost, 1990), but where assessment serves as a key source of motivation for many learners.

1.1 Learner control vs. quality control

The lack of response from testing specialists with regard to applying learner-centered techniques to the assessment of language skills like listening is not surprising given the natural tension which exists between learner control and quality control in language testing. While advocates of learner-centered approaches propose giving learners control over various aspects of language learning, testing specialists maintain that assessment practices should be guided by the cornerstones of good testing, ie validity, reliability, practicality, and washback (Alderson, Clapham, & Wall 1996), and not by individual learners themselves.

How can ELT practitioners accommodate both increased learner involvement in skill area testing and still maintain high testing standards?

Classroom assessment offers an ideal environment for piloting and implementing learner-centered assessment techniques. Unlike national or standardized exam situations, in low stakes or classroom testing situations teachers often have control over exam development and administration. The classroom assessment environment provides opportunities to hand over decision-making duties and creative tasks to learners.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is threefold. First, we will briefly define what is meant by a learner-centered approach. Secondly, we will provide a rationale for infusing learner-centered techniques in classroom assessment. Thirdly, we will suggest a framework and specific activities for incorporating learner-centered classroom assessment techniques.

2.0 A Learner-centered approach to language instruction

A learner-centered approach in language instruction is founded on the concept that the learner is central in the learning process. Learners learn primarily because of what they bring, in terms of their perceived needs, motivations, past experiences, background knowledge, interests and creative skills to their classroom experience. Teachers, on the other hand, are seen as "facilitators, helpers, and resources" (Campbell and Kryszewska 1992) and their role becomes de-centralized. Learners are active as opposed to passive recipients of knowledge. Furthermore, learners may assume a decision-making role in the classroom. Learners often decide what is to be learned, through which activities, and at what pace. Learners can also produce materials and provide realia for the classroom.

3.0 Rationale for learner-centered assessment

Advocates of learner-centered teaching methodologies and curriculum argue that involving learners through learner-centered techniques enhances motivation which in turn heightens achievement. Learner-centered approaches offer additional benefits for the classroom teacher including but not limited to: constant needs analysis, less prep time through student-generated materials, peer-teaching and correcting, increased group solidarity, de-centralized teacher role, increased understanding of student concerns and problems, learner-training benefits, and finally, more mature and responsible students.

Classroom teachers could expect similar benefits from adopting assessment practices that utilize learner-centered techniques. Classroom teachers who involve their students in test development, administration, and marking, would find their students becoming more motivated and responsible. Learner involvement in classroom assessment would also raise both teacher and learner awareness of learning and test-taking strategies. Involvement would additionally help students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses in listening comprehension. Finally, a learner-centered approach to assessment would promote student autonomy and independent learning skills.

3.1 Testing the listening skill

Listening has been frequently identified as a skill area that is often tested but rarely taught (Tauroza 1997; Field 1997). Even in non-assessment situations most classroom listening activities center around some pre-listening task followed by listening to a monologue or conversation and answering some form of comprehension questions which are then evaluated. Feedback consists of students comparing their answers with a "correct" answer.

Many proponents of communicative language teaching advise, however, that language teachers shift from an orientation of "we will teach only what we can test" to finding ways to evaluate those skills that are important for learners (Savignon 1985).

A learner-centered approach to listening comprehension assessment would provide classroom teachers with an excellent opportunity to discover what learners value in listening.

4.0 A framework for incorporating learner-centered techniques in listening assessment

Incorporating a learner-centered approach to listening assessment entails three necessary steps. First, classroom teachers should evaluate the learner-centeredness of their present assessment practices. Secondly, teachers need to identify the areas in listening assessment (i.e., test development, administration, marking) in which learners can be actively involved without compromising standards or upsetting local educational practices. Finally, teachers need to develop, pilot, and infuse learner-centered listening assessment activities into normal classroom routine.

4.1 Evaluating the learner-centeredness of classroom listening assessment practice

The following checklist (see Figure 1) represents a tool teachers can use to evaluate the learner-centeredness of their current listening assessment practices.

4.2 Areas for student involvement in listening assessment

After teachers have evaluated the learner-centeredness of their current assessment practice, they need to identify specific areas in listening assessment in which their students could be actively involved.

The classroom assessment process is usually divided into three major phases: test content and development, administration, and marking. In the test content and development phase, teachers identify skill or sub-skill areas to be tested, choose topics or themes, and select and write test questions and instructions. In the test administration phase, teachers make decisions regarding the date and time of the test, student seating arrangement, equipment and media (audiotape, videotape, live reader) needed, and what interaction and extra materials are allowed. This is the phase where all administrative testing policies and procedures are addressed. Once tests have been administered, they need to be scored. Important areas like developing marking criteria, deciding who marks the test, and checking and recording scores need to be considered.

5.0 Sample learner-centered assessment activities

Although classroom teachers usually assume full responsibility for all aspects of the testing process, each phase in the assessment process offers valuable opportunities to involve learners. The teacher role should be to decide which area(s) are appropriate for student involvement as well as to design and monitor activities where students take responsibility for certain aspects of the listening assessment process.

The following sample activities involve students in deciding what is to be tested, selecting or producing appropriate materials, writing test questions, administering listening tests, and scoring such tests. All of these activities can be adapted for different skill areas in addition to listening.

Student-Generated Exams

Students design and produce listening tests which they later administer and score. Typically, student generated exams are produced in groups and given to other groups of students.

Student generated exams provide teachers with interesting insights into what information and skills students value.

Test Committee Activities

Different groups of students are given different test-related responsibilities. Such responsibilities could be rotated over time so all students have opportunities to be involved in various aspects.

Legislative Activities

Students are given certain decision-making powers regarding their tests. Such powers might include agenda-setting, voting on various aspects of test content, administration, and marking.

Producing an Answer Key

Students work in groups or as a class with a written transcript of the listening passage they heard in order to produce a key that will be used to mark their tests.

Peer Correction

Students are responsible for accurately marking and scoring each other's tests.

Self Correction

Students are responsible for accurately marking and scoring their own tests.

6.0 Important Considerations

When identifying target phases in the assessment process and selecting and planning specific activities, teachers should consider several important issues:

Classroom Context - How will class size, grouping (ESL/EFL), seating arrangement, and available equipment affect the expected outcome?

Student Population - How will student-related factors such as age, maturity level, student conduct, proficiency level, range of abilities, or gender affect their ability to participate successfully in selected learner-centered activities?

Test Weight - How important is the test?

Practicality - How much or how little will anticipated student involvement hinder or expedite the assessment process?

7.0 Conclusion

Although good testing practice seems to be at odds with a learner-centered approach, we believe that, not only is it possible to infuse aspects of learner-centeredness into the listening assessment process, but that classroom teachers should be actively pursuing this goal.

Proponents of learner-centered approaches maintain that increased learner involvement in aspects of the learning experience is highly beneficial. We conclude that the benefits of learner involvement should be further extended into classroom assessment practices. Involving learners in their own listening assessment would be both motivating for students as well as help teachers gain insight into what their students really value.

Figure 1

How learner-centered is your classroom listening assessment?

Directions: Write a number from 1 to 5 in the boxes to indicate the extent of student involvement in your current listening assessment practices. Use the following scale:

1 (1pt) - never my students
2 (2pts) - sometimes my students
3 (3pts) - 50/50
4 (4pts) - usually my students
5 (5pts) - always my students

Test Content and Development

- ☐ Who chooses the listening topics or themes?
- ☐ Who selects the testing formats or tasks?
- ☐ Who writes the listening text?
- ☐ Who develops the test questions?
- ☐ Who writes the instructions?
- ☐ Who decides which language (L1 /L2) the instructions or questions are written in?
- ☐ Who selects the key vocabulary?

Test Administration

- ☐ Who selects the time and date of the exam?
- ☐ Who chooses the seating arrangements?
- ☐ Who operates the equipment or reads the text?
- ☐ Who dictates the instructions?
- ☐ Who decides when the test begins and ends?
- ☐ Who decides how many times the text is read/played?
- ☐ Who decides how much interaction is allowed during test administration?
- ☐ Who decides whether and which extra materials (dictionaries, notes, texts) are permissible or not?

Test Marking

- ☐ Who has input into marking criteria?
- ☐ Who marks the tests?
- ☐ Who verifies or checks that marking is correct?
- ☐ Who keeps track of scores?

Scoring: Total the numbers in the boxes and see where your score falls...

19-38: ☹ If your classroom falls into this category you should explore ways to involve your students more.
39-59: 😐 Your students already have many opportunities to be involved in their listening assessment. How about exploring new ways to increase their involvement?
60-80: ☺ Your students are already quite involved in your classroom listening assessment and you should be helping your colleagues by sharing your ideas.
81-95: ☺ ☹ Be careful that you aren't compromising standards or upsetting your school administrators!

References

Alderson, J., C. Clapham & D. Wall. (1996). *Language test construction and evaluation*. Cambridge: CUP.

Benson, P. & P. Voller (eds.) (1997). *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Harlow: Addison, Wesley, Longman.

Campbell, C. & H. Kryszewska. (1992). *Learner-based teaching*. Oxford: OUP.

Deller, S. (1989). *Lessons from the learner*. London: Longman.

Field, J. (1997). Skills and strategies in the listening classroom. *New Directions in Listening*. Cairo: American University of Cairo Press.

Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamom.

Nunan, D. (1988). *Learner-centered curriculum design*. Cambridge: CUP.

O'Neill, R. (1991). The plausible myth of learner-centredness: Or the importance of doing ordinary things. *ELT Journal*. 45 (4):293-304.

Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House.

Rost, M. (1990). *Listening in language learning*. London: Longman.

Savignon, S. (1985). Evaluation of communicative competence: The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. *Modern Language Journal*, 69: 129-135.

Sinclair, B. (1997). Learner autonomy: The cross-cultural question. *IATEFL Newsletter* 139:12-13

Tauroza, S. (1997). Listening comprehension: How to teach it rather than test it. *New Directions in Listening*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

Tudor, I. (1996). *Learner-centredness as language education*. Cambridge: CUP.

Tudor, I. (1997). Autonomy and the "traditional" classroom. *IATEFL Newsletter* 139:18-19.

Underhill, A. (1989). Process in humanistic education. *ELT Journal* 43(4):250-260.

Wenden A. (1985). Learner strategies. *TESOL Newsletter* 19(1):4-5,7.

Wenden, A. (1986). What do second language learners know about their language learning? A second look at retrospective accounts. *Applied Linguistics* 7:186-201.

Wenden, A. & J. Rubin (eds.). (1987). *Learning strategies in language learning*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Strategies and Techniques for Assessing Listening Skills

SALLY ALI
United Arab Emirates University

Overview

Total physical response (TPR) was developed by John Asher (1977). Actually, he began to experiment with it in the 1960s. Later, in 1977, he noticed that 50 percent of the adults' utterances to children were commands. Thus, he believed that TPR was an effective way of introducing second-language learners to a second language. Asher et al. (1983, p.63) believe "that most students (about 80 percent) can rapidly internalize the linguistic code - the structure of the language and vocabulary - when language is synchronized with actual movements of the students' body." Three major strengths of the TPR approach were mentioned: (1) students "acquire" second languages at a quickened rate, (2) they remember what they have learned, and (3) do not find learning a second language stressful (Asher, 1983).

When we think of the comprehension approach, we mostly think of Postovsky and Winitz. Postovsky (1982) believed that listening is a decoding process which involves recognition knowledge, whereas speaking is an encoding process which involves retrieval knowledge. He concluded that "there is ample evidence from psychoneurological research that expressive language depends on receptive processes for its development" (Postovsky, 1981, p.172). Students' comprehension activities in listening and reading precede their productive activities,that is speaking and writing. Hence, the receptive skills - listening and reading - are what develop and expand "competence" (Chastain, 1988).

It is important to focus on meaning because most spoken language includes a lot of redundancy and students need to have the requisite background knowledge to understand the material. The goals of the students are to be able to understand the teacher, then the classmates, and subsequently other people outside the classroom. Krashen and Terrell (1983, pp.75-78) described the importance of having the teacher provide comprehensible input or the aural reception of language in the early stages of language learning. At the same time, researchers were also emphasizing the significance of the mental processes involved in learners' converting input into intake, which is whatever is actually stored in a learners' competence (Brown, 1994). Total physical response was highly recommended because it helped the students focus on meaning while watching the teacher and other students perform certain commands.

Prelistening activities are the most important activities since they provide the students with the necessary background, guidance, and direction to achieve the objectives (Chastain, 1988). Students need linguistic knowledge and background knowledge when they start listening to the assigned passages. In addition, their interest should be aroused, and they should be motivated by the teacher to feel confident enough to perform the given tasks. Richards (1983, p.235) pointed out that the most important criterion for choosing listening comprehension activities is "the degree to which they relate to teaching rather than testing objectives." Postlistening, on the other hand completes the sequence that was begun and provides them with feedback on how well they understood and accomplished the task, as well as gives them the ability to use what they have learned in other situations.

Important Strategies in Listening

Students need to have strategies to develop the listening skills that are needed for natural conversation. It is important to expose students to a variety of discourse situations, speaking styles, and listening tasks to help them develop their own strategies for comprehension. The following are just some of the most important listening strategies:

1. Don't worry about the words that are not clear.
2. Think about the situation (it will give you clues).
3. Ask if you don't understand something.
4. Pay attention to stressed words.
5. Try to guess the speaker's meaning.
6. Give a quick response (don't worry about mistakes).
7. Try to understand the speaker's purpose (Don't try to follow every word).
8. Predict what the speaker will say before you hear him (make inferences).
9. Remember the meaning (pick the word or expression that you want to remember).
10. Try to understand the speaker's attitude (positive, negative, or uncertain).
11. Focus on key words and key facts.
12. Focus on conversation themes.

Needs Assessment

Just who are the students who come to us for help? Where are they from? What are their individual necessities? These are the questions we ask ourselves each day. The students that knock on our doors are here for specific reasons. They have also come here with their background knowledge to learn a new language. It is important to see the needs of our students and to link curriculum with assessment.

Assessment Instruments

Students are first given a standardized placement test to establish their appropriate level. Next, they are placed in the proper class based on their English Placement Test scores. Finally, they are given a pre-test to make sure of their placement. Comparing pre-tests and post-tests can help the teacher see the ongoing progress of the students. The teacher may also prefer to give teacher-made tests throughout the term.

Alternative Assessment

Whereas standardized tests compare students' current achievement and the average performance of certain participants, and determine the learners' proficiency level in the beginning and end of a course, non-standardized tests like oral interviews and teacher observations, on the other hand, help determine and measure ongoing student progress in learning. The main goal of alternative assessment is to "gather evidence about how students are approaching, processing, and completing 'real-life' tasks in a particular domain" (Garcia & Pearson, 1994, p.357). Thus, the aim of assessment is not only to measure the students' levels of proficiency and achievement as seen on tests, but it is also to measure the students' ability to process language when reacting and interacting in real-life situations. Alternative assessment tools can give the teacher the opportunity of going beyond the regular standardized tests because they are specifically tailored by the teacher for the learners to meet their needs, while being an active participant at the same time. The use of the video, for example, as an alternative assessment tool, can allow the teacher and the students to replay it as many times as necessary to identify the students' strengths and weaknesses, while becoming independent in the process. The teacher can create her own material by videotaping the students as they perform a given task, then replay the video so that the students can achieve self-assessment. According to Di Pietro's approach to strategic interactions, there are three phases.

During the **rehearsal phase**, the students will be divided into groups with one scenario and four different roles for the scenario. Students will decide which role they would like to play. After the students have been grouped, they will discuss the role together and rehearse it. The teacher will go around and assist students in formulating their roles.

During the **performance phase**, the teacher will ask one person from each group to come up and perform before the rest of the class. The teacher here acts as an observer, but coaches and directs the students as well.

During the **debriefing phase**, the teacher comments on the students' performance first, then their grammar. Later the teacher regroups the students and asks them to write out their scenarios. During the whole procedure, the students are videotaped and shown the video later to evaluate their interactions and use of grammar. All of this improves the students' listening and speaking, as well as elicits their creativity in the process.

Auditory and Aural Skills

Kress (1993) divided listening skills into auditory and aural skills and had different ways and techniques of assessing and developing them.

Assessing Auditory Skills

Auditory skills refer to the ability to recognize sounds and discriminate between those sounds that are similar in a certain language. The following methods can be used to assess students' auditory skills:

1. **Sound Contrast Recognition in Words:** Ask students to listen to words, then circle (S) to indicate if they are "the same" or (D) to show that they are "different" on their answer sheets. Examples: sit/set; sit/sit/sit/; set/sit/sit (Kress, (1993).

2. **Sound Contrast Recognition in Sentences:** Ask students to listen to sentence pairs, then circle (S) if they are "the same" or (D) to show that they are "different" on their answer sheets.
   Examples: Did she eat it? / Did she heat it? (Kress, 1993)

3. **Target Sound Discrimination in Word Pairs:** Ask students to listen carefully to the initial, medial, or final sound of the word you are about to say, then listen to pairs of words. They should circle "yes" or "no" (Y/N) on their answer sheets to indicate whether the pairs of words have the same initial, medial, or final sound as the first target word they heard (Kress, 1993).

4. **Word Contrast Recognition in Sentences:** Ask students to listen to sentences then circle the words in parentheses that they hear. Examples: Would you like some more paper? / Would you like some more pepper?

5. **Vowel Recognition in Words:** Ask students to listen to words and write if the vowel is the "same" (S) or "different" (D).
   Examples: sheep/seek; seat/men; beg/bug.

6. **Rhyming Word Recognition:** Ask students to listen to the endings of words in a sentences, then, circle "yes" or "no" on their answer sheets to show whether or not they rhyme.
   Examples:
   I'd like to say
   This is a great day.

7. **Sound/Spelling Association and Recognition:** Ask students to listen to words as you read them in sentences and circle the matching words on their answer sheets (use homophones). Examples:
   Read: She **ate** an apple for lunch.
   On the answer sheet: ate / eight
   Read: People **groan** if they do not get their newspapers.
   On the answer sheet: grown / groan

8. **Sound/Spelling Association and Production:** Ask students to listen to the stressed words in sentences, then write them.
   Examples:
   Read: The bear chews its food with its strong teeth.
   They write: chews (as opposed to shoes).
   Read: He **knows** how to bake cookies.
   They write: knows **(as opposed to nose)**

9. **Sound/Spelling Discrimination:** Ask students to listen to homophones in sentences, then, on the answer sheet cross out the word they did not hear.
   Examples:
   Read: The road was covered with snow.
   The man **rowed** the boat across the lake.

On the answer sheet: road / rode / rowed.

10. **Sound /Spelling Association and Vowel Distinction:** Ask students to write the word they hear with the correct vowel.
Examples: The letter "C" sounds like /k/ before the letters: a,o,u (cat, come, cup); and sounds like /s/ before the letters: i,e,y (circle, certain, cycle).

Assessing Aural Skills

Unlike Auditory skills which refer to the ability of the student to discriminate among similar sounds, aural skills refer to the ability of the student to listen to and understand spoken messages. The following methods can be used to assess students' aural skills:

1. **Vocabulary:** Students listen to a word and mark the matching picture on their answer sheets (Kress, 1993).

2. **Aural Understanding/Pictorial Match:** Students listen to a short passage and mark the matching picture on the answer sheet (Kress, 1993).

3. **Aural Comprehension/Sentence Completion:** Students listen to beginnings of a sentence and a set of endings and have to mark on their answer sheet the best possible endings to complete the sentence (Kress, 1993).

4. **Aural Understanding of Main Idea or Gist:** Students listen to a passage, then they have to choose the best title for the passage from choices that will be read to them (Kress, 1993).

5. **Aural Comprehension to Complete Directions:** Students listen and follow directions (as in TPR).

6 **Simon Says:** Students play Simon says and do what the teacher wishes (Kress, 1993).

7. **Logical Predictions:** Students listen to a passage and the statements, then they have to choose the best statement that completes the story or answer questions regarding the short story (Kress, 1993).

8. **Factual Understanding:** Students listen to statements and mark whether they are true or false on the answer sheet (T/F) (Kress, 1993).

9. **Logical Understanding:** Students listen carefully to a statement with an error that they must correct. Example: Sam slept in his book (bed) (Kress, 1993).

10. **Best Definition:** Students listen to a sentence and have to choose the best definition for a given word. For example: students hear:
She put her jewels in the safe.
Then they see on the answer sheet:

a) a place to keep things (as valuables) safe.
b) harmless

11. **Listening Dictation:** Students listen to short sentences and have to write them down.

12. **Redundancy:** Students listen to regular fast speech that has reduced forms like: I wanna go home. Then, they have to write the long form: I want to go home.

13. **Stressed words:** Students listen to a short dialogue with certain stressed words that are deleted and have to write the missing stressed words. Students may also be required to place the stress on the words as well.

14 **A Cloze Passage:** Students listen to a short passage where there are certain words deleted. For example: every fifth word is deleted and they have to complete the passage. The more words deleted, the harder the passage is.

15. **Recognizing grammatical word classes:** Students may be required to listen to certain words and circle the part of speech (example: noun, verb, adjective, or adverb).

Techniques for Developing Auditory Skills

1. **Sound Flash:** Ask students to listen to the beginning sound of the word that you say, then compare it to the beginning sound of other words and raise a flash card which has (yes) to indicate that they are the same or one with (no) to indicate that they are different. Later, you can ask them to focus on the medial or final positions (Kress, 1993).

2. **Minimal Pairs:** Ask students to listen to words and indicate whether or not they are minimal pairs by simply raising the (yes) or (no) flashcards.

3. **Sounds and Numbers:** Write words on the board with certain sounds of vowels, for example, and number them, then ask students to raise their fingers with the correct number that refers to the correct sound on the board.

4. **Vowel Bingo:** Ask students to listen to the vowel sounds and look at the card that indicates the words with the same sounds and place the markers on those words with the pictures.

5. **Consonant Bingo:** Ask students to listen to the initial consonants and look at the card that indicates the words with the same sounds and place the markers on those words with the pictures.

6. **Flash Spell:** Ask students to raise flash cards that have spellings of certain sounds, then have them hold up the cards that spell the sounds they hear (Kress, 1993).

7. **Closed Syllable Spelling Bee:** Divide the class into two groups. Then, have students listen to words with a closed syllable, and spell the words. For example: the closed syllable short "a" as in bat, fan, map, and cap.

8. **Survival Bingo:** Game 1 - Word Bingo: Using the word clue cards and the word-side of the board, ask students to listen to a letter, for example "B: appetizer." This tells the students to look for the word "appetizer" in the B column.
   Game 2 - With the word clue cards and the word - side of the board, ask students to locate the word that is said without stating the column this time.

Techniques for Developing Aural Skills

1. **Exploring Grammar:** (Challenge) Students listen to a sentence and have to determine the error in the sentence, then they correct it.

2. **Exploring Grammar:** (Choice Selection) Students listen to three sentences and have to determine which one is grammatically correct.

3. **Exploring Grammar:** (Change) Students listen to a sentence and certain directions which require them to change the sentence. For example: change the sentence to reported speech:
   He said, "I'll come home early." becomes: He said that he would come home early.

4. **Exploring Two-Word Verbs:** (same as exploring grammar)

5. **Exploring Prepositions:** (same as exploring grammar)

6. **Survival Bingo:** (Finding the word that matches the definition) Students listen to a definition of a word and have to find the word on the board. For example: Students hear Column "B - how far you can see" and must find the word "visibility" to match the given definition.
   (Definition Cards). Using the word clue cards and the definition side, students are asked to listen to the clue word "obstruct" and have to find the definition (block the way) from all the definitions on the board.

7. **Pick a Picture:** Have students listen to words and find the matching picture. For example: man/pan (Kress, 1993).

8. **Following directions:** Have students listen to each other's commands and follow them. They could also listen to directions to going somewhere and have a map.

9. **Simon Says:** Use the game to teach parts of the body, names of clothing, action verbs, etc. (Kress, 1993).

10. **Captions:** Ask students to listen to sentences and match them with the pictures on their papers (Kress, 1993).

Techniques for Developing Listening Comprehension Through the Use of Music, Song, and Video

Integrating music, song, and video in the language classroom can be quite rewarding because they can make the class come to life and help students learn more because they are highly memorable and create a relaxing atmosphere by providing variety, harmony, and fun. The following are only some activities that can be used to develop listening comprehension:

1. **Text Completion:** Choose a song appropriate for the students' level. Find a recording of it and type the lyrics and leave every few number of words out, like in a Cloze passage. Pass out the song with the blanks and have students work in pairs to look at the words. You may discuss the vocabulary as a prelistening activity before actually listening to the song. Then play the song and have them fill in the missing words alone first, then in pairs.

   Variation 1: For lower level students, you could actually leave the words at the bottom of the page and have students choose from them.

   Variation 2: You could leave the same number of dashes of letters that make up the words to make it easier.

   Variation 3: You could leave out one of the rhyming pairs.

   Variation 4: Leave out certain word-classes like verbs, prepositions, adjectives, etc.

   Variation 5: Insert an extra word here and there to see if students will delete them.

   Variation 6: Leave an extra space or two to see if they will find them.

2. **Selective listening:** This can be done by asking students to listen for certain phrases, grammatical constructions, or words without deleting anything. Students can also listen for pairs of rhyming words, e.g. see/me; you/true; street/meet.

3. **Answering Questions:** Students can also be asked to answer certain questions after the listening task. This is usually done when they are listening to a video and are asked to answer questions with who, where, when, what, and why.

4. **Discourse analysis of pop songs:** Pass out a handout with certain questions on analyzing the song and have the students answer them while listening to it. Have them work in groups afterwards to discuss their findings. Some sample questions may be:

   1. What do you think the title is?
   2. Are the place and time mentioned?

3. Is the sex of the singer implied or stated in the lyrics?
4. How does it make you feel?
5. What is the situation here (What's happening)?
6. What do you think could happen next?
7. How do you personally understand the song?
8. Could this actually happen?

5. **Describing:** You can also ask students to describe the song based on a feedback sheet that you hand out before listening.

6. **Song Rotation Dictation:** This works best in a language laboratory. Give each student a piece of paper and have them listen to a tape and transcribe as much as they can in a certain amount of time. Then, when you say stop, they have to rotate their papers and tapes to the next student who in turn looks at the transcription and replays the tape to check the transcription. Each student is free to make any necessary changes before passing the transcribed song to the next student. This way each student will have listened to a number of songs and looked at a number of transcriptions before making corrections.

7. **Guessing the music or song:** Students have to guess the type of music, for example: vocal/ instrumental.
they have to guess the number of instruments; the tempo: fast/slow; the mood: happy/sad/other.

8. **Describing the actions by discussing the tenses:** Here students describe what happened in the video, what's happening, and what will happen. The teacher can keep the video sound off in the beginning, then elicit student creativity to what might be happening. Afterwards the teacher may play the video with the sound. The teacher may also have students play roles in the end and listen to each other's conclusions before actually listening to the video conclusion. This helps students share expectations and information in an intriguing way.

9. **Creating student-made videos:** The teacher can use students themselves to create their own video and then play it back to achieve self assessment.

10. **Problem-solving:** Students may be asked to listen to a given situation where there is a problem, and they have to solve it.

Conclusion

The role of the teacher is not just limited to determining the needs of the students, stating the objectives and goals of the course, but also involves the indication of progress through feedback and comments. The teacher needs to identify the obstacles that are preventing students' ongoing progress, then design means of eliminating them. This can be done regularly in class while each task is being done. Another way is through feedback sheets, comments on learning logs, or recorded tapes. Again, who are our students? What are their goals and objectives? What are their skills and background? We must ask these questions, or we will never know. To be truly learner-centered, we must proceed by first asking questions, then gathering the data, and finally analyzing it. This takes a lot of time, but it is an inevitable process if we really want to help meet our students' needs.

Everything starts here with our students. Students' needs assessment starts here. Students' placement starts here. Curriculum development starts here. Program objectives start here. Students' evaluations start here. Finally, students' progress can be seen and felt.

References

Baker, Ann & Goldstein, Sharon (1992). *Pronunciation Pairs: An Introductory Course for Students of English.* Cambridge University Press, Third Printing.

Brown, H. Douglas. (1994). *Teaching by Principles An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* Prentice Hall Regents.

Campbell, Collin & Kryszewska, Hanna (1992). *Learner-Based Teaching.* Oxford University Press.

Chastain, Kenneth. (1988). *Developing Second-Language Skills: Theory and Practice.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Hadfield, Jill. (1992). *Classroom Dynamics.* Oxford University Press.

Kress, Jacqueline E. (1993) *The ESL Teacher's Book of Lists.* The Center for Applied Research in Education.

Lynch, Tony. 1996). *Communication in the Language Classroom.* Oxford University Press.

Murphey, Tim. (1994). *Music & Song.* Oxford University Press.

Rost, Michael & Uruno, Munetsugu. (1995). *Strategies in Listening Tasks for Listening Development.* Lingual House.

Schultz, Matthew & Fisher, Alan (1988). *Games for All Reasons Interacting in the Language Classroom.* Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Sheerin, Susan. (1994). *Self-Access.* Oxford University Press.

Tanka, Judith & Most, Paul. (1996). *A Listening/Speaking Skills Book/Interactions One*. McGraw Hill.

Tomalin, Barry & Stempleski, Susan . (1993). *Cultural Awareness*. Oxford University Press.

Computerizing an EST Course

CHRISTINE CIPRIANI
University of Jordan

1. Introduction

A relatively recent development in writing instruction is the use of computers and computer-assisted instructional programs in teaching foreign language composition. The computer can be an especially useful tool in courses where students are advanced enough in their language skills to be able to engage more fully in the composing process. In this case study of a college English class for first year engineering and computer science students in Jordan, it will be shown that students who work primarily on composing and rewriting compositions on word-processing programs and who use telecommunication technology can improve their writing skills. Such technology stresses both creative conversational writing (as in e-mail) and attention to form (as in the word-processing condition) which promotes the development of writing at all levels.

2. Defining the EST Course

In EST courses, students need to be able to read textbooks about scientific subjects and condense key points of the text in written form for exams in English as a second language. They are often challenged by a variety of rhetorical forms, technical terms and expressions. The proposed EST course is one which helps students identify the forms of typical genres in science and technology in order to analyze and reproduce such texts for lab reports, exams and other kinds of written assignments. According to Widdowson, "...to instruct people in a discipline, or subject, or profession is to make them aware of its typical genres, to present them in such a way that they are noticed...since the rhetorical features of genres are realized by linguistic means, then the language will be noticed as well, and so the necessary condition for learning will be met accordingly" (Swales, 1996).

In restructuring English 1103, an introductory English course taught at Princess Sumaya University College of Technology (PSUCT) in Jordan, an organizing principle of the syllabus was the genres within the context of the students' content courses, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. This course is a requirement for all Electrical Engineering and Computer Science students for the B.S. It was traditionally taught as a lower-level writing course for non-native speakers of English, and the setting was a standard classroom using a grammar-based approach to writing. In the revised class; a discourse-based approach to writing was emphasized.

The study focuses on the remodeled English 1103 course using computer-based instruction in the Fall of 1997 at PSUCT. Scientific texts in the field of engineering and computer science were used to model key elements in scientific writing, such as describing function or process, as well as providing a range of technical vocabulary. Using a computer lab in the engineering building, students developed and revised fourteen activities into a portfolio representing various genres of writing (e.g. advertisements, instruction manuals, and movie reviews). Special emphasis was placed on the revision of texts where students were given three levels of feedback: (1) conference feedback, (2) individual feedback though teacher comments on portfolio pieces and via e-mail (3) computer assisted feedback through grammar and spell checks on students word processing program.

Student work was done completely on computer disks, and drafts were printed out for the teacher. Students then made corrections based on the feedback, saving the second draft as a new file on their disks. Thus, their disks served as a notebook, holding a variety of files including course information and syllabus, a working space for ongoing assignments, a storage space for portfolio pieces. A private dialogue journal was created through an on-line English Chat Club. Students wrote to each other as well as the teacher to develop their writing skills in a less formal electronic environment. Students, in this medium, did not have to focus on form, but rather on meaning. In this computer-assisted instructional setting, students and teacher worked together as a writing-speaking English community, with students responding to their peer's e-mail, and student-teacher conferences through ongoing revisions of their electronic portfolios.

3. Background of Study

PSUCT is a privately owned institution owned by the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) in Amman, Jordan. RSS has not only provided the necessary funds for establishing PSUCT, but has also provided its technical expertise and cumulative experience in the sciences. PSUCT offers B.Sc. degrees in two disciplines: Computer Science (CS) and Electronics Engineering (EE). One of the reasons for selecting these particular disciplines is that RSS has distinguished itself through research in these two fields. The total number of students is roughly 600 in CS and 400 in EE. A third of the CS student population is female. On the whole, the curricula are field oriented, even though there is an attempt to strike a balance between theory and practice. The total number of credits is 132 for CS and 170 for EE. Of these credit hours, only 3 credit hours, or one class, are dedicated to English. All courses from CS and EE departments are conducted in English, and all course textbooks are written for the native speaker of English. Professors often translate difficult concepts into Arabic, nevertheless, students are assessed in English during their three exams per course for the semester. Professors from both CS and EE departments mostly agreed that the skills needed for student success in content area classes are the ability to read in English scientific texts and consolidate information into a written form for testing or for lab reports.

The two students in my section of English 1103 who will form the basis of this case study are both first year students at PSUCT. Samer is at the beginning level of English and Mahmoud, an Intermediate. Samer is an 18-year-old EE major at PSUCT. He studied English for eight years at a public secondary school in Jordan, but he spent most of his life in Turkey where his family is from. In his questionnaire he reported his good quality as "patience" and his bad quality as "anxiety." Samer also pointed out that he has never used a computer before this class. His future plans is to go on for an M.S. and Ph.D. in his specialization. Mahmoud is an 18-year-old CS major at PSUCT. He studied English for fourteen years. After graduating from a private secondary school in Jordan, he took a summer course in computers and decided to major in it. In his questionnaire he reported his good quality as "helpful" and his bad quality as "stubborn." His future plan is to run a successful business.

These two students were both required to take English 1103 to graduate, but Samer had a lot more hurdles to pass the class than Mahmoud. In an EST class such as this one, where students not only specialize in different disciplines, but also have various levels of ability in English, it was difficult to target specific principles and levels of proficiency as it is done in many ESL courses. A standard ESL program divides students according to proficiency levels through a placement test. Once students are separated into levels, teachers begin charting out goals for the class. In this EST class, a new approach was needed. To handle this multi-disciplined, multi-leveled class and to meet the needs of the students in their other classes, a program was developed to allow students to target their own language needs. This was accomplished through student developed electronic portfolios based on fourteen activities throughout the semester which allowed for individualized revision through computerized support. This support involved both word processing and use of computer assisted instruction, as well as computer-mediated communication where students had access to the teacher through e-mail.

4. Review of Literature

4.1 Difficulties encountered by Arab writers of English

A number of studies have indicated that writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second language. In Kroll's Second Language Writing (1990), a number of studies are cited which indicate that students transfer writing strategies from L1 to L2 (Mohan and Lo, 1985; Edelsky, 1982, Jones and Tetroe, 1987). In other words, students who lacked first language strategies display a similar lack of strategies for writing in their second language.

Yorkey (1974) points out that Arab writers have rhetorical and grammatical difficulty when producing English texts. In Arabic there is more use of coordination than subordination in written paragraphs. A tightly organized English paragraph, with its topic sentence, controlling idea, and supporting ideas, is a manner of expression which is foreign to Arabic-speaking students, and one which they often interpret as "cold and calculating." Modifying Arab students' rhetoric, however, could be a sensitive task for the teacher. Students feel that the way in which they organize their ideas is a cherished part of their personality. They resent being told to write according to English rhetoric; it is as if the teacher had told them to think and feel differently. Yorkey suggests giving these students practice in writing and identifying different paragraph components. They need practice with subordinate clauses, particularly adverb clauses of time, place, result, concession, cause, purpose, and condition. Topic sentence identification is important.

In grammar, Scott & Tucker (1974) found that problematic areas for Arabs involved verbs, prepositions, articles, and relative clauses. One universal problem is the presence of redundant object pronouns in relative clauses resulting in clauses which are grammatical in Arabic but ungrammatical in English (e.g *The teacher is the woman that you know her*).

4.2 Designing Writing Tasks for Different Proficiency Levels of English

To combat such problems, according to Celce-Murcia (1991), it is important to use a variety of writing tasks at all levels and particularly at the beginning level. Writing, in addition to being a communicative skill of vital importance, is a skill which enables the learner to plan and rethink a communicative process. It provides a learner with opportunity to focus on both linguistic accuracy and content organization.

Practical writing tasks differ dramatically from beginner to advanced proficiency levels. Tasks for beginner students are procedural in nature and therefore have a predictable format. This makes them, according to Celce-Murcia (1991), particularly suitable for writing activities that focus primarily on orthography, mechanics and linguistic accuracy. Lists of various types, notes, short messages, simple instructions, and other such writing tasks are particularly useful in reinforcing classroom work. Celce-Murcia (1991) outlines six essentials in giving advanced writing tasks. Part of teaching writing should involve developing basic communication tools. First, students should receive a task description (goal of task and its importance). Second, a content description (content areas that might be relevant to task) should be provided. Third, the teacher should provide an audience description (intended audience, their background, needs, expectations). Fourth, format cues should be explicitly taught to show students the organizational structure of written product. Fifth, students should learn about the linguistic clues (grammatical structures and vocabulary selections). Sixth, spelling and punctuation cues should be a focus (attention to spelling rules, using dictionary for accuracy and capitalization conventions).

Emotive writing tasks, including journals, diaries, and letters emphasize format, punctuation, spelling of appropriate phrases and expressions and past tense verbs. In such assignments, the teacher should limit level of structural and vocabulary knowledge to learner's proficiency level.

School oriented tasks such as essays, questions, and summaries are a major part of the writing curriculum. The audience is first and foremost the teacher. Later audience can be an unknown reader who needs to get information being imparted exclusively through writing. Responses could be single phrases or sentences, summaries (a list of main ideas). There should be attention at the linguistic-accuracy level and at the message-transmission level. Celce-Murcia (1991) concludes that it is the combination of content and organization with accepted formal features that will lead learners to better utilization of the writing skill in their future use of English.

4.3 Process Approach to Writing

The Process Approach to writing started in the 1970's. Such an approach emphasized multiple-draft process which consists of generating ideas (pre-writing); writing a first draft with an emphasis on content (to 'discover' meaning/author's ideas); with second, third and possibly more drafts to revise ideas and the communication of those ideas. Reader feedback on the various drafts is what pushes the writer through the writing process onto the eventual end-product.

Such an approach, according to Key (1996) has yet to catch on at many universities that are exam-driven, where teachers may view it as impractical or "too time consuming" or not good preparation for the exam. In such cases, teachers may equate endless hours of marking with working hard. Traditional red-pen corrections have great face-validity showing teacher's superiority over students and demonstrate teacher doing his/her job. Other reasons teachers do not adopt a process approach is that they have no time to plan such an approach, especially with large classes. Yet a process approach is ideal for Arab students who should be given ample opportunity to revise drafts towards an ideal, as opposed to being corrected and graded on the first try.

Feedback is a fundamental element of the process approach to writing. Input from a reader-teacher to the writer-student should have the effect of providing information to the writer for revisions. Such feedback should include comments, questions, and suggestions to produce a "reader-based" prose (Flower 1979) as opposed to "writer-based" prose. Through such feedback, a writer learns where he or she has misled or confused the reader by not supplying enough information, illogical organization, lack of development of ideas, or something like inappropriate word-choice or tense.

4.4 Computer-Mediated Communication as Reader-based Prose

Writing in an electronic environment, especially electronic mail (email) messages is a kind of writing that is reader-based in that the message content must be understood by the reader in order for communication to continue. As new communities of Computer-mediated communication (CmC) emerge, research demonstrates that participants behave in different ways within different electronic communities. Murray (1988) found that e-mail was used only for work-related issues among a particular community of IBM employees. In contrast to Murray's findings, McComick and McCormick (1992) found that CmC served many social functions among a community of undergraduate e-mailers. In this study, an analysis of e-mail written among peers within an undergraduate computer science department showed that less than half addressed work-related concerns. Baym (1994), in her dissertation on the relationships developed among a computer-mediated fan community, discovered that e-mailers, despite the lack of the cues on which people rely to establish identity and organize face-to-face interaction, and despite the fact that there is neither the shared space nor the shared objects on which relationships and cultures often rely, created identities, relationships and communities through this interactive discourse. A dissertation that focused on mentoring relationships developed through e-mail found that secondary school students in an electronic mentoring program focused on work related issues 78% of the time. Students in the school-to-work program were using their mentors as resources for assignments, thus giving them incentive to focus on work related issues. Nevertheless, 22% of the e-mail did focus on social, non-work-related, issues (Cipriani, 1996).

In dealing with CmC relationships involving teachers and students, communication styles on e-mail do make a difference. An important finding was the focus on mentor/teacher roles in the emailing dialogues with their mentee/student partners. Certain mentors styles proved to be more successful with students than others. Characteristics of successful mentoring communication involved volubility, adopting colloquial language of the students, willingness to engage in non-work related topics as well as work-related topics. Modeling good

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

communicative practices for the workplace proved to be a success with mentors who shared information as "insiders." Relationships that encouraged an egalitarian order were more successful than those that emphasize a hierarchical status (Cipriani, 1996).

5. Methodology

5.1 English 1103's Feedback Approach in Writing

An important issue for both students and teachers when giving feedback is to distinguish between Lower Order Concerns (LOC's) from Higher Order Concerns (HOC's). Research shows that peers (and often teachers) tend to look at mechanics (LOC's) more than content (HOC's). Students in the English 1103 were given guidance on how to look at HOC's through check lists that focus on the organization of the text. Activities to develop sensitivity to different levels of the text included defining and illustrating functions of topic sentences, illustrating uses of logical connectors, support with examples, restating sentences to illustrate the structure and content of a paragraph. Questions which guided the process included: (1) What is the author's purpose in writing? (2) Underline the author's topic sentence: Does the topic sentence tell you, the reader what to expect in the remainder of the paper? (3) Are the author's points clearly presented to the reader? (3) What do you expect in the remainder of the paragraph? (4) Does the author give enough examples to support his /her points? Put question mark next to anything not clear, put exclamation marks next to good examples. (5) Does the author provide a good conclusion? Underline author's restatement sentence.

Areas of feedback included peer feedback, conference feedback, and teacher's comment feedback. Peer feedback focused on content, organization of ideas, and development through specific examples. Grammar and punctuation were handled in teacher lessons. The advantage is that it saves teacher time on certain tasks, freeing them for helpful instruction. Such feedback is considered more at a learner level. An important factor is that learners get a greater sense of audience with several readers. A reader learns more about writing through critically reading others' papers.

The conference feedback session focused on a revision process at a group or class level. The advantages are that such interactions provided good interaction between the teacher and students.The teacher provided a live audience to ask for clarification, check comprehensibility of oral comments, and ultimately help the writer sort through problems and decision making. Compared to written comments, conferences allow more accurate feedback per minute while helping students build oral competency. Such conferences consists of inductive problem-solving grammar activities assessed as problematic from the student's own papers. Organized questions included: (1) What is the main points of your paragraph/essay? (2) How have you organized your points? (3) Who is your audience? (4) What do you hope to achieve? (5) What specific area do you want the teacher to look at? (6) Are there new words, phrases that you feel insecure about?

Finally, teacher feedback played three roles. The supporter role involved responding to the content with comments such as "good point." The reader role involved the teacher who is concerned with breaks in logic: "as your reader I'm confused about..." The grammarian role involved providing reasons why a given grammatical form is inappropriate. Summary comments by the teacher included pluses, minuses and a suggested goal for the next draft. Teacher feedback comments included: (1) comments which connect to lesson objectives; (2) comments which note improvements, e.g. "good" and a reason why; (3) comments which refer to a specific problem, plus a strategy for revision; (4) questions with enough information for students to answer; (5) a summative comment of strengths and weaknesses; (6) honest questions as a reader to a writer rather than statements which assume too much about the writer's meaning. Comments which are not helpful to the feedback process is "good work", "nice job" and "better." Students prefer statements about how to improve evaluation and error correction feedback.

A part of this feedback, email dialogue between teacher and student involved a non-directive approach based on counseling techniques which put the teacher in the position of the sympathetic listener. The teacher asked for more information, showed appreciation for what the student says, uses acceptance and approval words such as "I see" "I understand. This is especially important for Arab students who do not separate their work from themselves (as is the case in Western/American thinking). Conferences fail when they are not non-directive. Authoritarian role thwarts students concerns from emerging in dialogue (Schwerman 1987, Walker and Elias 1987). In such email conferences, grammar points were eliminated from the discussion. Instead, all discussion was meaning-focused rather than rule focussed.

5.2 Discipline-based Approach in Writing

When teaching English 1103, it was the teacher's focus to highlight the shape of the text that was common in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. The aim was to make technical material accessible to the second language learner by providing touch points to aid in decoding and reconstruction for writing. "It can be argued that the advantage of a discipline-based approach to language teaching is that it shifts from a contextual to an inter textual perspective. In drawing attention to genre as a mediation between code and context, it facilitates the process of abstraction upon which language learning depends. Students can be induced to notice form because it plays a crucial part in realizing conventions of communication" (Widdowson 1993c:34). An application of this, suggested by Widdowson, is to provide models of texts in an unrestricted manner: "One way is to engage students in activities which are not directly derived from disciplines, but contrived from them in reference to their basic principles of design and more general generic features" (1993c:35). "discipline referred rather than discipline determined" (ibid.:35).

English 1103 students, who were simultaneously taking core courses such as Computer Science and Engineering in English, were able to figure out the answers on exams by learning language that is derived from disciplines. This disciplinary literacy enabled them to engage in extensive ellipsis, making much use of sentence fragments and abbreviations. Sentence subjects, complements, articles, and prepositions could be omitted, for example, since they are understood to be recoverable by members of the discourse communities. These students, despite their difficulties in operating within a second language, coped with these specialized materials by understanding the genres to which these materials belong.

The EST course reinforced English skills of such students by taking texts that were contrived from such disciplines, drawing on computer science and engineering's more generic features.

Basic principles of design underpinned a wider academic context. Advertisements, for example, are a particular way of seeing. Selling a product is a "literary language game" that is strongly shaped and structured by entries and illustrations. Such "homely" examples are more accessible than the arcane observations and cryptic documentation of professional scientists and scholars. Classifying, coding and perceiving are always educationally and historically constructed, whether we are shopping or in a museum. The mundane descriptions of product features thus turned out to be a useful piece of a larger and more truly academic picture.

There is a problem, however, of different cultural loads and values across languages that are not transferable. In writing, cross-cultural academic styles can conflict. To deal with such problems, the course focused on: (1) interplay of text and task, whereby difficulty in the former is balanced by simplicity in the latter (and vice versa); (2) attention given to form, broadly understood as a comprising rhetorical structure and its linguistic realization, in order to make this form/structure both visible to the learner/user and to make it understandable as an evolved response to a recurring context of situation. (3) restriction to single genre: allowing exposure to more difficult texts in the same discipline to be a coherent rather than disruptive set of activities, since now the better-known genre can come to the direct assistance of the lesser-known ones as the participants explore themes and variations, and models and instances, in a mutually supportive enterprise.

5.3 Model Approach to Writing Tasks

Making writing tasks clear and specific involves providing full directions. A vague writing assignment such as "Write a theme about friendship" not only will lead to nonequivalent performances but will cause many students to waste valuable time just getting started. Thus it is highly important to write the composition in such a way that the task is clearly and unambiguously defined for each writer. According to Harris (1969) three basic principles should be followed: (1) allow no alternatives (students performing different tasks from others is difficult to compare, (2) writing tasks should be doable within class time, (3) four levels should be distinguished- poor, fair, good, excellent.

In English 1103, writing tasks were divided into Master's (1997) basic categories: controlled, semi-controlled, and decontrolled models. Controlled models are generally designed for students with low proficiency levels, as they require the least amount of independent thinking. A simple paragraph can be recopied with adjustments such as verb tense or gender. Semi-controlled are appropriate for intermediate proficiency students as they require considerable knowledge of grammar and sentence structure and some writing experience. A prompt can be given (e.g. Write a paragraph that tells what you usually do on Friday) with guidelines (e.g. use present tense, adverbs such as usually always), use chronological order. A decontrolled writing model is appropriate for intermediate to advanced proficiency students with substantial experience of writing and a solid background of language knowledge. A common exercise was to provide students with a model essay (or a reading passage) which students read, analyzed and discussed before setting out to write an original essay on a given topic.

An important consideration when using models for a decontrolled task was for the teacher to determine whether to use constructed or authentic texts. When using authentic texts, models provide exposure to conventions of the language, especially discourse but also lexical items and structural patterns. They demonstrated many modes of rhetorical organization, communicative purpose, and anticipated audience; and they are windows on culture, revealing customs, values, assumptions, and attitudes toward the world. Models were viewed as a resource, rather than the ideal. Students explored these texts with the teacher and with each other, comparing it to their own products at various stages in their writing.

5.4 Verbal Interaction through Computer-mediated Communication

One model of authentic texts in English 1103 was electronic mail (email). E-mail, a product of Computer-mediated Communication (CmC), is often described as a talking text. It reflects a multitude of typed comments and responses, sent and received and sent back again, in which the original text begins to be seen less as the primary focus of concern and more as the occasion for an extended dialogue among interested participants. At the core of CmC was a form of communication with a triple context: (1) the interaction of an individual with a computer, (2) the interaction between two people communicating and (3) the context of cyberspace. Derived from this context is an interactive written discourse which is a hybrid of oral and written language. Because e-mail combined the immediacy of the telephone with the persistence and potential reach of print, it tended to blur long-standing distinctions between oral and written language.

The possible relationship between teacher feedback on portfolios and communication styles in mentor-mentee (teacher-student) e-mail was important. The way students were corrected was perhaps more important than the correction itself. Perhaps, one can suggest that in writing, students begin to develop a sense of identity through positive communicative experiences through various mediums (email and portfolios), and for different purposes (speaking or writing).

6. Description of English 1103

6.1 Defining the Portfolio Process

The portfolio writing model adopted in the English 1103 class at PSUCT involved writing a minimum of one paragraph a week which led to fourteen pieces by the end of the semester. Each activity would go through two revisions labeled on their disks as two separate files (e.g. ACT1.1, ACT1.2 for Activity One, Draft One and Activity One, Draft Two). Each activity took approximately two weeks to go through a revision process of first draft to final product. Implementation of feedback for one paper included three major steps: (1) input (clustering, listing, brainstorming, interviewing, reading models of technical writing or particular topic); (2) first feedback: teacher written comments on the first drafts; (3) second feedback: conferences at a group level during class, individual or group conferences after class in the computer lab or individual "chat" after hours on e-mail. These feedback sessions focused on common student errors at an HOC or LOC level, or even non-work-related topics that helped develop the student-teacher relationship.

6.2 Computerizing English 1103

Students had the option of working in either of two computer labs at PSCUT. One was located at the CS (Computer Science) Department while a second was located at the EE (Electrical Engineering) Department. The most convenient lab to work in was the EE Lab which was one floor below the English 1103 classroom. Before and after class, students had the option to get assistance during "office hours" which were held in the EE Lab. This lab consists of 30 stations. Each station had Microsoft Word 6.0, a typing tutorial program and grammar program all of which were the subject of a demonstration during class time. A lab technician was always on hand from 9:00-5:00 to assist students with technical problems. Students in the CS Department had an added advantage of taking a word processing class during their first year, nevertheless, it was clear during our word processing sessions that all students appreciated follow up lessons. During these sessions CS students were paired up with EE students to do an exercise of creating, saving, editing (which consisted of spell check and grammar check) and replacing a sample draft.

Internet and e-mail service were available to all students at PSUCT who were interested. There were two computers at the CS Department that were completely dedicated for this purpose. Students did not have to pay for this service, nor did they have to pay to get an e-mail address. Internet services, such as "Hotmail" offered free e-mail addresses. Despite such service, first and second year students were reluctant to jump on the Internet bandwagon. Of the 44 students in English 1103, only 10 signed up for the "English Chat Club" on the Internet.

For those students who did get involved, however, emailing afforded students the chance to initiate conversations, not the teacher. Students were able to focus on work or non-work-related issues, as they felt comfortable and practiced a variety of language functions. Breaking down the barriers between an authority figure and the students helped the feedback process, making it less face-threatening as students began to have more trust in the give and take of the various levels of discussion in and out of the class.

6.3 Sample Week

Each week was organized in the same fashion. Students met twice a week, one hour and a half per lesson. The objective of the first lesson of the week was to highlight the use of language in technical texts by presenting a model which highlighted a particular aspect of a scientific genre (e.g. describing shape, function, generalizations and supporting statements). This was done through either a semi-controlled activity or a decontrolled activity. Both activities were pitched at intermediate to advanced levels. Beginner proficiency levels were paired with more advanced students for assistance, in addition to individualized support from the teacher.

Sources would include the students textbook for the class *(English in Electrical Engineering and Electronics/EEE* and *Oxford English for Computing/OEC)*, as well as excerpts from the students textbooks in their content areas, or authentic texts from magazines or newspapers. The second lesson of the week involved presenting the writing activity for the week. In this follow-up session, objectives of the previous activity would be reintroduced and applied in a portfolio assignment.

Week Three, for example, was dedicated to focusing on describing process:

> The cathode ray tube (crt) is used in oscilloscope, radar receives and television sets. The type described here is that used in oscilloscope. By means of a crt, an oscilloscope not only shows the size of a signal, but also how the signal varies with time. The crt operates as follows. First electrons are emitted from a heated cathode. Then these electronics are accelerated to give them a high velocity. Next they are formed into a beam which can be deflected vertically and horizontally. Finally they are made to strike a screen coated on its inner surface with a phospor... by means of the deflection system, then, the beam can be made to traverse the screen both horizontally and vertically.
>
> EEE pp 27

The text, "The Cathode Ray Tube," from the electronic engineering book provided an academic model for indicating process in a scientific context. Using a deductive approach, students analyzed the text for (1) sequence words *(first, then, finally)*, (2) present passive forms of the verb *(are accelerated, are formed, are made)*, (3) instructions as explanations *(by means of the deflection system*, the beam can be made to traverse the screen), and (4) relative clauses (they are formed into a beam *which can be deflected vertically and horizontally)*. Practice exercises in the textbook focus on these four elements. One exercise involves putting sentences in order based on a diagram. This diagram depicts a process, the distribution from the power station to the consumer. Students must rearrange and edit sentences provided in the book in the correct order the four linguistic structures that related to process.

Tuesday's class involved using an authentic text from the *New York Times Magazine*. Focusing on listening comprehension skills, the teacher read a recipe while students took notes:

> **Lamb in Spicy Pineapple Marinade (abbreviated)**
> 2 cups of fresh pineapple juice
> 1 leg of lamb, boned, trimmed of excess fat and tied (about 5 pounds)
>
> -
>
> 1. In a medium saucepan, combine the pineapple juice, vinegar, onion and cumin seeds.
> 2. Second, bring to a boil, lower the heat and simmer until reduced by 1/3, about 25 minutes.
> 3. Place the leg of lamb, which is placed in a very large zip-lock bag, and pour in the marinade.
> 4. When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 450 degrees. The lamb is roasted for an hour.
>
> **Yield**: About 10 servings (*New York Times*, Food Section, Molly O'Neill)

After a second reading of the recipe, the students provided pieces of the text which they had recorded in their notes which correspond to the four aspects of process writing discussed in the first lesson of the week. A chart was filled on the board depicting the class restatement of the text:

(1) sequence words	(2) present passive verbs	(3) instructions as explanations	(4) relative clauses
Second, bring to a boil	*The lamb is roasted for an hour*	*simmer until reduced by 1/3, about 25 minutes*	Place the leg of lamb, *which is placed in a very large zip-lock bag.*

The portfolio activity was then established, providing alternatives to beginner as well as advanced proficiency levels of English. Using a decontrolled method, students created a process piece based on their week's experience analyzing constructed and authentic texts. Students could write any process piece they wish modeled after either an authentic or academic piece from class. For advanced students, they were encouraged to draw from their content courses to describe a process in their respective fields. For beginner students, they were encouraged to bring a family recipe. The common denominator for students of both proficiency levels was that they included the four aspects of language use in writing a process piece.

7. Samples of Portfolio Pieces

7.1 Process Piece

Samer, the beginner, chose to produce a recipe:

How to make Pizza

First, we mix one cup of tomato with 250g of cheese.
Second, we mix one cup of water with 500g of flour, and we leave it on the table fifteen minutes. After that, we put the first mixture on the second. Finally, we put it in the oven for about thirty minutes.

Most of Samer's sentences are simple or compound sentences. He rarely used complex sentence types at the beginning of the semester. Though Samer's piece is simple, it still employs the sequence words used in process pieces. Notice that he increases the font size of the sequence words to highlight this feature.

Mahmoud, the intermediate, chose the more difficult task of describing a process from his course studies. He uses a list format to illustrate steps of a process.

Describing a Process

1. **The signal is generated from the Radar.**
2. **The signal is amplified.**
3. **The signal radiated by the transmitter antenna hits the target.**
4. **After the signal hits the target, a weak reflected signal is received by the receiving antenna.**
5. **Then the signal is fed to the amplifier and the rectifier.**
6. **In the comparator, the received signal is compared with a reference signal from the transmitter.**
7. **Finally the received signal and the reference signal are displayed.**

A variety of sentence structures are used, including simple and complex. Mahmoud also uses sequence words to signal different stages of the process. Besides sequence words, Mahmoud uses verbs in the present passive (the signal is amplified), and explanation (the signal *radiated by the transmitter antena* hits the target). Whereas Samer adopts one out of four elements taught in class, Mahmoud adopts three out of the four. At this stage, three weeks into the semester, there remains a gap between the two levels.

7.2 Test One and Revision

For the first exam, both students had to handle a process text using a scientific diagram. Students were instructed to write a minimum of one paragraph focusing on the Chemical industry. The test involved recognizing four levels of a process which were represented by four captions of a diagram: (1) Raw materials (2) The Chemical Industry, (3) Chemicals which are used by the chemical industry itself or by other industries in the production of durable and non durable goods for the (4) The Ultimate market (see Appendix). A feedback session on the exam generated another opportunity to revise a draft. Students were encouraged with extra credit to take their exams and revise them on computers with the guidelines that were provided in this session.

This first feedback session involved group paragraph writing, followed by analysis, revision and evaluation done in class. Pairs of students received an envelope with the test cut into four strips (each strip representing one process of the Chemical Industry). Criteria for evaluation of the test was to focus at the HOC levels. Students were to consider what each strip represented in the process, order these strips into a sequence, and then develop a few sentences for each strip. They were encouraged not to just copy the words in each strip but to rephrase check-list (e.g. Which strip comes first?), and progress to being less structured (e.g. What sentence would you write to combine two strips?). Finally no guidelines were used to reconstruct the test on the computer. Students who chose to revise their exams word processed their second drafts (the test being the first draft) using Microsoft's spell and grammar checkers, as well as peer editing for the second draft. By getting Samer to use vocabulary such as "cohesion," "logic," "restatement" when addressing aspects of the text in the class discussion, the teacher was better able to help the student in individual conferences.

Samer's revision of his test shows his ability to deal with scientific texts. Though he only had to produce a paragraph, Samer has now understood the value of each paragraph as representative of every level of the process:

Chemical Industry

The chemical industry makes our new life. We need to four levels to obtain it. It is starts from raw material and ends by ultimate markets.

First, raw material provides us with chemical products. It founds on the earth at many shapes such as, forest, air, farm, oil and gas wells.

The second level is chemical product. There are many plants convert the raw material to chemical products. For example, there are more than 13,500 plants in U.S.A converting raw material into more than 50,000 chemical products such as, acids, alkalis, salts, organic compounds and dyes.

Then the chemical products are used to produce primary substance by two ways. First of them is by chemical industry itself. The second method is by other industry. The chemical industry method is used to produce many primary substances such as, cosmetics, detergents, soap and paints. On the other hand the other industries methods consist of Durable and Non durable goods. Durable goods include many primary substances such as, electrical equipment, metal and glass. Non durable goods include many primary substances such as, food products and textiles.

Finally, all of these primary substances are used to make secondary substance that we use in our life. Secondary substance includes ultimate market such as T. V, Planes and car.

He includes a topic sentence and supporting evidence for each paragraph. Using sequencing words, he continues to order each process as he did in ACT3 to tie the essay together. He adds to this structure new rhetorical cues such as transitional words for coherence (e.g. "On the other hand" is used correctly to contrast the Chemical Industry from other industries. This text shows a dramatic increase in complexity, from his recipe piece.

7.3 Advertisements

In another portfolio piece, students were asked to produce an advertisement based on a language focus of generalizations and supporting evidence. The generic focus on language, one that is used in all types of English classes, is particularly important to the science student. Rather than stating to the ESP student, "When we writing a generalization which our readers may not understand, we must support it", it is perhaps more appealing to make them aware of their own environment where such statements are made. The newspaper was an ideal resource for this since it is so familiar to the student. Advertisements in newspapers are ideal for highlighting the importance of the reader-consumer of the ad. In no other genre is the text more focused on the audience than an advertisement. Students were given the opportunity to "tempt" or "convince" his/her reader to buy into the text. This required a number of linguistic features beyond providing generalizations and supporting evidence. Such a text was suitable to beginners because they tend to have fewer words and supporting graphic images, while at the same time it challenges the advanced students with other cues to underlying meaning.

Newspaper advertisements were brought in by students as well as the teacher and analyzed for general and supporting statements. While Samer borrowed an ad that existed and rephrased it, Mahmoud produced an original ad. Both students showed an understanding of the audience and their role which was to convince their reader to buy into their product, demonstrating a keen understanding of the advertising genre. The difference between the two students is obviously one of proficiency. Mahmoud's ability to mesh humor with the poetic technique of repetition gives his piece an authentic flavor while Samer's ad is more of a replication or a simplified copy of a text:

Samer's second draft shows an improvement over his first draft on the LOC level. In his first draft he has a run-on sentence where he connects simple sentences with commas:

Swatch (Fashron Constanten)
IT is a great chance
It is produced in 1755, and it's picture is very beautiful ,
also it is water proof. It gives you wonderful feel. Finally it is cheap.

In the second draft, Samer creates a compound sentence and two simple sentences:

Swatch (Fashron Constanten)

IT is a great chance
It was first produced in 1755, and it's picture is very beautiful.
Also it is water proof. It gives you a wonderful feel. Finally it is cheap.

This correction is a result of a variety of feedback processes. He received teacher comments on his first draft, a grammar check from his computer and conference sessions on sentence types.

On the HOC level, Samer's technique of using a large font (24 over the standard 12) shows his understanding of a visual effect (not illustrated in the sample). Filling the page, at his level, is a successful technique of making the few words he knows stand out. In this second draft, he uses sequence words to list his reasons for why a consumer should buy the watch.

Mahmoud's ad is more sophisticated on both levels of HOC and LOC. First, he uses a variety of sentence structures. He employs italics, underline and bold features to highlight meaning in his ad. Mahmoud's use of italics to underscore the product's benefits is distinguished from the regular type of the message that focuses on the disadvantages of not using the product. His pun on the word "spot," a common name for a dog as well as a word for blemish, is playfully manipulated in the advertisement. His final pitch for the product, which is underlined, promises the customer an offer he cannot refuse.

In comparing Mahmoud's first draft to his second draft, it is clear that he does very little revision. One could suggest that at the advanced level, less revision is needed. In draft one we see a well structured advertisement with few errors:

CLEAR & CLEAR

If you Only go out at night because of your Spot, then you are Out Of Control.
Under Control is Knowing how to prevent that spot.

If you Join the dots on your face, then you are Out Of Control.
Under Control is Cleaning with an active ingredient that you can feel working.

If you Use more and more foundation on your spot, then you are Out Of Control.
Under Control is Using a cleaner that removes Dirt, Oil and Make-Up.

If you Have a dog that calls you spot, then you are Out Of Control.
Under Control is Spotting the benefits of CLEAN & CLEAR.ý

Special Offer: ***Buy Tow & get one FREE.***
With CLEAN & CLEAR We (Promise you Shiny face in Few days.)

In draft two, Mahmoud works only at the LOC level:

CLEAN & CLEAR

If you Only go out at night because of your Spot, then you are Out Of Control.
Under Control is Knowing how to prevent that spot.

If you Join the dots on your face, then you are Out Of Control.
Under Control is Cleaning with an active ingredient that you can feel working.

If you Use more and more foundation on your spot, then you are Out Of Control.
Under Control is Using a cleaner that removes Dirt, Oil and Make-Up.

If you Have a dog that calls you spot, then you are Out Of Control.
Under Control is Spotting the benefits of CLEAN & CLEAR

Special Offer: ***Buy Two & get one FREE.***

His two corrections are eliminating a typo (y), correcting a spelling error *(tow)*, and eliminating parenthesis in the final line.

Since the actual writing of the activities occurred outside of class, students were expected to become more independent in their learning and practice of writing. This was promoted by making them aware of assessment criteria and methodology, and involving them in self and group assessment of pieces of writing. Students were asked to spell check and grammar check each piece to begin the first stage of the editing process.

Students were also provided with a number of `self-help' materials associated with the various writing tasks for independent study. These included grammar and typing computer programs to model appropriate answers and techniques for improving the speed at which these activities could be done. Models of writing each week were also used to demonstrate the way in which the assessment criteria would be applied to pieces of writing. Students tended to use these materials in a variety of ways depending on their level of competence and confidence in both writing and the technical material. Having access to these materials greatly increased their expectations in terms of provision of a greater range of support materials in the future.

Student evaluation of the program has been very positive (with the exception of peer assessment) and students who have finished the course have indicated that they found the program useful in improving their writing and would like similar teaching or materials for writing tasks in higher years. Objective measurements of improvements in writing skills have proved difficult, since so many variables are involved, but staff feedback suggests that the increased awareness and value placed on writing by students has been reflected in their written work.

8. Description of Language Functions in Student E-mail

8.1 E-mail Topics reflect work-related functions

Work-related topics focused on portfolio assignments as well as other issues that related to the course and student grades. Such e-mail involved confirming information, giving opinions and requesting advice (see Appendix for full texts of email).

1. **Confirming information** (Husam, 12/14/97)
    a. "Yes I know what a Fulbright program is...
    b. "I tried to get through Dr. Anwar's site but I couldn't...but I will try harder..."

2. **Giving an opinion** (Husam, 12/16/97)
    a. "About my opinion ao (about) the skill of english a student must get here in pscut is how to do a report, you know our major is full of labs so what faces most of the students here in jordan is the way of handling..."

3. **Requesting advice** (Amer, 12/17/97)
    a. "I wrote you this letter in order to consider my case and advice me what to do?"

4. **Expressing a problem and giving advice** (Mahmoud, 12/17/97)
    a. "YOU HAVE MISS SPELLED MY NAME AGAIN IT IS (MA) NOT (MO)

5. **Expressing uncertainty** (Husam, 12/19/97)
    a. "please wish me good luck I am afraid of this exam. I hope everything would be ok on saturday"

6. **Asking for information** (Laura, 1/8/98)
    a. "Actually I want to ask you about the homework of ACT 4.1..."

7. **Expressing future goals and intentions** (Amer, 12/4/97)
    a. "I am writing this letter for you to achieve two goals: The first one is that I want to inform you that...The second one is that I would be happy if you could..."

8.2 E-mail Topics reflect non-work -related functions

Non-work-related topics focused on a variety of topics which covered more social interaction where the teacher was treated as a peer. Such change in the relationship outside of the classroom confines often was treated with surprise and a positive response.

8. **Expressing excitement** (Mu'ath, 12/4/97)
    a. "And for whome to my techer! I don not no what to rigth becuos I do not belive my salve"

9. **Expressing agreement and preference** (Mahmoud, 1/8/98)
    a. agreement: "I ADORE HOOTIE AND THE BLOWFISH SPECAILY THE SONG CALLED (SOMEDAY)"
    b. preference: "I LIKE GOOD QUALITY MOVIES LIKE (MEN IN BLACK) (LIAR LIAR) (BRAVE HAERT)
    c. Paralinguistic cues: "HAVE A (: LIFE"

10. **Introducing oneself as an outsider** (Firas, 1/8/98)
    a. "I am an electronics-engineering student in the PSCUT. Allow me to express my admiration..."

The teaching and development of communication skills required an interactive component which catered to the individual as both teacher and student, and fostered learning and practice by example. Components of such teaching could be seen through student email responses where they could guide and orchestrate discussions that were relevant to their needs.

8. Conclusions

The development of good writing skills is currently being targeted by many institutions of higher education as part of a goal to include teaching transferable (generic) skills to undergraduate students. In the English 1103 class, types of written work appropriate for mastery by a first year Computer Science and Electrical Engineering student were first identified, after which a series of teaching and learning materials was developed for incorporation into the portfolio component of the course. These teaching materials began with a very structured teaching approach whereby the emphasis was on communicating the learning goals to the students, and then it progressed to giving the students opportunities to learn about the writing tasks through application, assessment, and feedback.

The first part of the course thus had a distinct awareness-raising component, and had to dispel myths such as "but we did science so that we wouldn't need to write and use spelling and grammar". From the outset students were encouraged to discuss their ideas in class and on email about good writing and in this way identify the criteria on which assessment would be based (always a key focal point for the students!). This process gave students confidence in their current abilities and allowed them to learn and practice communication skills in an informal setting.

Once this groundwork had been completed, the formal teaching input decreased as students put theory into practice in a number of activities. These writing tasks were of increasing complexity and also required more complex use and application of the students' expanding content area knowledge. Students received individual formative feedback and discussion sessions after each task and were encouraged to progress and improve their writing by applying this feedback in subsequent tasks. The portfolio process employed in English 1103 is student rather than teacher-centered. Through computer assisted instruction and email, students had multiple opportunities to focus on their evolving texts outside of class time which either connected to the lesson objectives or went beyond these objectives. Often, students at beginning level of English proficiency were given extra credit to work on various computer programs such as grammar and typing to help them reach the class norm.

Discussions on this type of project since its inception have provided continued constructive feedback through questionnaires and e-mail discussions with students and professors alike. While they have been positive about both the aims, the teaching of writing skills, and its effect on student writing there is an underlying concern that there is a need for more training of staff in this area and that there is insufficient time for assessment and giving feedback. The former may be addressed by the provision of a comprehensive teaching package which could be prepared by both English teachers and content-area teachers for specialized projects in lab reporting and technical writing in both Computer Science and Electrical Engineering.

References

Celce-Murcia, ed. (1991). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Harris, David. (1969). *Testing English as a Second Language*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Keh, Claudia. (1996). "Feedback in the writing process: a model and methods for implementation." In Hedge, Tricia and Norman Whitney, eds., *Power, Pedagogy and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kroll, Barbara, ed. (1990). *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Master, Peter. (1997). "Using Models in EST." *English Teaching Forum* (35:4, 30-38).

Swales, John. (1996). "Field-Guides in Strange Tongues: A Workshop for Henry Widdowson." In Cook, Guy and Barbara Seidlhofer, eds., *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics*. New York: Oxford University Press

A Critical Look at Computer Aided Language Learning

CHRISTINE M. CANNING
United Arab Emirates University

" The human is the enemy of what he does not know" -proverb

1.0 Introduction

Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) and Computer Aided language Learning (CALL) can no longer be feared by the foreign language instructor or EFL/ESL program. CAI and CALL can aid learners and programs through a plethora of concepts in a language. Unlike a textbook of curriculum, CALL programs and software can be instantly reviewed, revised, and updated; thus, making computer aided instruction an accelerated method of instruction.

CALL must be looked at in an educational context as well as with a practical approach. There must be a bridge that closes the gap between the teachers, students and computers in the foreign and second language (F/SL) classroom. It is essential that practitioners constantly evaluate software texts and visuals. More importantly, the classroom practitioner must observe CALL in action with positive acceptance of what it can do to foster language learning, while keeping in mind the scope and limitations of educational technology.

1.1. Types of Software

Various forms of educational technology can be implemented into the CALL classroom. For example, drills; text manipulations; games; artificial intelligence; task based programs; ICQ; Hypercard programs; word processing; interactive video; videodisk; CD ROM; Multimedia; Internet; graphics; hypermedia; networking; telematics; email; electronic bulletin boards; chat rooms; and broadcasts. There must be a concentrated understanding of systems as a whole and individuals responsible for working with CALL programs need to serve as managers of the technology.

2.0 Teacher Challenges with Technology

However, as the old saying goes: "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink". Likewise, programs can lead teachers and students into language learning labs but they can't force them to be managers or acceptors of the educational technology. Canning (1998) observes that people hate what they fear and that some educators tend to fear technology in the F/SL classroom. She further reiterates that with the rapid changes in the global world it is impossible to hate and fear the computer in the field of education any longer. She points out that in some instances, teachers fear that the computer may replace them as the facilitator of the learning process. Educators need to assume that the compute does not replace the practitioner, but rather serves as a teaching tool that can be used to exploit a teaching point to its fullest potential.

Practitioners using software programs must assess not only what computers can do that other forms of instruction address less adequately, but whether or not the computer aided instruction fails the learner because of the low potential in the software or due to the failure of the educators to exploit it. Canning (1998) states that "practitioners should not only examine the software's user-friendly tendencies, compatibility with other programs and hardware, but how items in the hardware, such as images and icons, affect the communicative and linguistic competence of the software". CALL programs must establish a progression for further learning through planned and directive techniques that aid in the educational process of mastering course information. Overall, teachers have to be encouraged to serve as classroom mediators who serve as a buffer for problem solving between the computer and the student.

3.0 History of CALL

It cannot be denied that CALL is a fast and expanding field. The history of CALL is constantly developing itself at a rapid rate as educational technology improves. CALL was first introduced into higher education and now it has expanded into every aspect of education including distance learning courses, for credited degrees. In addition to rapid expansion, wider ranges of applications have changed CALL from programmed learning to systems that promote communicative and linguistic competence.

The development of CALL as a field is forever changing the way programs teach foreign and second languages. CALL has revised itself from yes/no answers to making students produce texts. Computer aided language learning has become interactive. Its aims are more to promote fluency and accuracy. There has also been more of a change towards acquisition as well as to aid in language learning in all skill areas. There is a stronger influence on building pedagogical trends that can help promote language learning at all levels and abilities. CALL has been developed into a context that uses and explores educational technology in a variety of areas. To be more succinct, CAI explores making autonomous decisions, personalized lesson plans which encourage reading and writing, as well as teaching subsystems of language.

CAI and CALL are advantageous to foreign and second language learners, if they promote accuracy and motivation and are learner centered. CALL benefits a student by its ability to keep records; give instant feedback; interpret data about student performance; individualized student learning; and by allowing faster access to information. Most importantly, CALL software can be reviewed, revised and updated by commercial developers and instructors. Another benefit of CALL activities are that they can be time saving and promote greater student autonomy. The greatest accomplishment of CALL is that it brings the student out of the classroom and connects him/her as learners to the world.

However, there are a great many disadvantages to CAI and CALL. Teacher and student resistance to the technology is one of the greatest problems reported by most programs. Upkeep for on-going teacher training can hinder the promotion of CALL in F/SL learning. Computers can be seen as being impersonal tools in the language learning environment. Teachers, administrators, students, and materials developers may fail to explore CAI's and CALL's potential in the classroom. Another disadvantage of CALL is the amount of time it takes to complete, program, and learn tasks or programs. This combined with more administrative challenges such as expense, maintenance, mechanical breakdown, compatible resources, and overall costs (both financial and in man-power) can be overwhelming to most teaching environments.

4.0 Evaluating CALL

Towndrow (1998) believes that it is necessary to set parameters for an evaluative framework of CALL usage. Factors that challenge CALL program; such as resistance, training expense, maintenance, mechanical breakdown, compatible resources, cost and time must be outweighed by the advantages of how CALL programs help F/SL learners. When evaluating the effectiveness of computer aided instruction and materials, it is important to establish course objectives. These objectives of a particular CALL program must change with the times and the technology while at the same time meeting the needs of the students enrolled in the courses. Below are a series of questions designed to help practitioners think about CALL and CAI in their classrooms and programs:

1. What can computers do that other forms of instruction address less adequately?
2. Is the CAI and CALL program compatible with the teacher's beliefs about curriculum, learner and learning?
3. Are software packages compatible with the system in use, including the printer?
4. Are the directions self-explanatory and easy to read?
5. Are the instructions controlled by the teacher or the student?
6. Can students return to the instructions in the program?
7. Is the program menu driven?
8. Does the software program use actual "English" messages or does it repeat computer jargon?
9. Is evaluation or a form of documentation for the text and results available?
10. Will the software motivate and interest the students?
11. Does the CALL Program or its software allow for collaboration?
12. Does the CALL Program or its software allow for choices?
13. Are the CALL materials relevant to actual course materials in the classroom?
14. Does it meet curriculum or target performance objectives of the units being studied?
15. Does your CALL program of the computer aided instruction fail, due to low potential or to failure of educators to exploit it?
16. How would you evaluate your CALL course objectives in your program? In which areas does it exceed your expectations and in which areas does it fail to meet the needs of your students and course materials?
17. What types of teaching methodologies work best with CALL and/or CAI?
18. What are the strengths ad weaknesses of your programs course materials and facilities?
19. What types of training programs do you offer faculty and students? What are the costs, maintenance and upkeep for program development?
20. Are your machines, programs, software, and instructors updated to their fullest potential?

4.1 Aspects of Good CALL Programs

Good CALL activities are friendly, humanistic, and motivational as well as student centered. The CALL instruction allows for hands-on instruction and builds confidence through individual and collaborative learning strategies. It can overcome the barriers formed between teachers and students as well as to reduce anxiety as it applies to the fear of technology.

CALL instruction and a program's given curriculum should fit together like a hand and glove. They cannot and should not be treated as separate entities. The two serve to compliment each other. In my opinion, a well managed CALL program should make sophisticated software easy to understand and useful for the language learner. This is because good CALL programs can be integrated a program's curriculum and address non-linguistic aspects of learning. For example, programs can help students get information, extract information, and analyze information by using graphics, spreadsheets, databases and other types of information to lower anxiety.

CALL experts such as, Odell (1986) state that "a pedagogical evaluation of both the intrinsic qualities of a program and the language teaching materials of specific applications are needed to enhance a more productive form of computer aided language learning" (p. 70). Therefore, a CALL curriculum as well as computer aided instruction must be relevant to the target and course objectives of a given program.

Canning (1998) states that the computer must be used to "sketch and stretch" lessons to their fullest potential and that CALL activities should be friendly, humanistic and motivational. More importantly, they should be student centered and monitor learner progress through continuous feedback. Activities should be designed to promote both personalized and collaborative learning in the CALL classroom. Barriers between teacher and students in the CALL classroom need to be addressed in order to prevent an impersonal atmosphere and to help lower anxiety depending on their sophistication of a particular program.

In an effort to improve evaluative techniques, CALL programs need to administer needs analysis surveys to their students because as current theorists stress "students should be in charge of their own learning". Based on the results, CALL programs need to reevaluate their short-term and long-term goals.

Overall program constraints, as they apply to the CALL component and the classroom component, should be examined. In addition, the purpose as well as the design of learning and on-going program evaluation should be constantly revised and reviewed to further improve CALL materials. Schlev and Canning (1998) believe that various software packages must be used and evaluated properly to ascertain whether or not the learners have obtained specific objectives related to the program goals. Materials need to be utilized. As Stokes (1998) observes it is important that programs buy the right software and integrate it properly into the curriculum.

Canning and Schley further believe that various software packages must be used properly to ascertain whether or not the learners have obtained specific objectives related to the program goals. The key to exploitation depends on whether or not materials need to be utilized. As

Stokes (1998) observes it is important that programs buy the right software and integrate it properly into the curriculum.

5.0 Integrating CALL Programs

How can various aspects of current course materials be integrated into CALL programs or computer aided instruction? Picture prompts used to teach language in textbooks can be scanned into hypercard programs or adapted from commercial software. Visuals in CALL software are essential in order to help maximize the effect of the text used for computer aided instruction. It is essential to be able to have visual support and visual literacy when learning to acquire new vocabulary or contexts through computer generated learning task.

Research in reading, psychology, and language arts have demonstrated that visual prompts and cues can help to teach specific points relevant to the course material at a faster rate than lengthy, confusing texts (Odell 1986, Canning 1998). A visual can allow the learner to use the illustration as a reference point or to limit a context in a CALL program. The learner can associate the icon with a particular software function to enhance his/her understanding of a target area that needs to be mastered in the program.

However, I would like to clarify that at no time should the images serve as a constraint to a CALL program, rather the image should compliment the text in the software package. I believe that the visual images used in CALL software should help teach both practitioners, learners, and material designers how to analyze objectives, consider subject matter, identify learning sequences, select materials, and serve as a tool to help in software evaluation processing. This is because I think that areas of review and revision with the use of visual components in CALL programs can expand a learner's capabilities to grow by teaching them the target concepts in the language with the use of technological support.

6.0 Conclusion

To summarize, CALL should be student centered and provide feedback to the program, student, teacher and curriculum developers. CALL software programs need to monitor individual student learning; be friendly to users; show on-going teacher and student training possibilities; supplement the curriculum and tests; as well as take advantage of other forms of technology.

CALL programs should integrate themselves into an institution's current curriculum. Furthermore, they should address nonlinguistic aspects of learning by getting, extracting, and analyzing information through the extended use of graphics, spreadsheets, databases or communication on line. CALL administrators and practitioners must make key decisions on evaluating their program's effectiveness.

CALL programs must work hard to overcome common problems such as teacher resistance to technology and lack of money and ideas. CALL programs must commit to on-going teacher training and program self-improvement. CALL programs must dedicate themselves to taking risks to see how different programs, research, or experimentation helps the learners in their computer-aided classes. This can be done through use as well as through exploration.

Overall program constraints, as they apply to the CALL component and the classroom component, should be examined and the purpose as well as the design of learning and ongoing program evaluation should be constantly revised and reviewed to further improvement of the CALL materials.

References

Canning, C. (1998): The Importance of Computer Assisted Learning in Higher Education", *EMCEE*, 4:3, April 1998 p. 6

Canning, C. (1998): "Maximizing the Effect of Visuals in Software Programs", *EMCEE*, 4.3, April 1998, p. 5

Cuttingham, D. (1989): "Past Predictions, current perspectives and future prospects in CALL", *MLTA, Annual Congress Paper Selections.*

Decco, W. (1994): "In defense of Drill and Practice in CALL" *Computers and Education*, 23:1/2, pgs. 151-158

Odell, A., (1986): Evaluating CALL Software". In G. Leech and C. Candelin. *Computers in ELT*, Longman Press. p 69-71

Pennington, MC, (1996): *The Power of CALL* Houston: Athelstan

Stkes, A., (1998): "Do your CALL Programs work for you?" *COLESLAW*, 1:2, p. 3

Schley, N. and Canning, C., (1998): "Test Writing for Computer Based In-Class Assessment: Applications for Math and Computer Science Courses Taught in a Foreign or Second Language", *TESOL Arabia News*, 5:2, March 1998, p.18-19, 21

Towndrow, P., (1998): "Students' reactions to CALL in the Gulf", In Salah Troudi and Christine Coombe (eds.) *TESOL Arabia Conference Proceedings* Volume 2, p. 1-12.

Building Bridges Between Trainers and Teachers in the United Arab Emirates

HEDI GUEFRACHI & SALAH TROUDI
United Arab Emirates University

1. Introduction

The development of an education/training program for supervisors of English at the national level in the United Arab Emirates (U AE), came out of an awareness of first year university students' low proficiency level in English and the inadequacy of their thinking and study skills for university studies. The goals of the supervisors' course, as it was officially called by the UAE Ministry of Education were first, to share current approaches in teacher education with the participants, and second, to help English teachers adopt ways of improving their students' proficiency in English through teacher-centered training.

The trainees had first hand experience of a teacher trainee-centered approach to teacher education. With the whole course as an example of how to run several teacher-centered training sessions, we hoped to provide the supervisors with a new and alternative approach to teacher education for pre- and in-service programs. We also hoped that the course would help the supervisors and the teachers reflect on their training and teaching methods respectively.

It has been established (English Language Curriculum Document, 1994) that in-service teacher education in the UAE can be improved in order to prepare English teachers, who come from various educational and cultural backgrounds, to tackle the problem of low English proficiency in the entire country. One of the major problems of the current style of teacher education is that it is not teacher-centered and relies heavily on the lecturing approach. Another problem is the multi-cultural and educational backgrounds of English teachers. A third problem is the linearity of teacher education in the country. University lecturers have very little, if any, contact with what is happening at secondary and elementary schools. For their part, secondary and elementary English teachers might not have a precise idea of the requirements at the university and are probably not trained to prepare their students for what awaits them after secondary schools. The secondary school English syllabus, for instance, does not address reading and writing skills in a way that enables students to function at a lower-intermediate level in these two skills. The supervisors' course, therefore, proposes a cyclical approach to teacher education whereby tertiary, secondary, and elementary teachers work together on the issue of improving learners' proficiency levels.

2. Context

2.1. Background Information

English is taught as a foreign language in the UAE State schools. It is taught and perceived as just one subject among many in the school syllabus. Arabic is the native language and the language of instruction in the schools and for many subjects at the university. The textbooks and materials used in teaching English have been developed locally, primarily for cultural reasons, by the curriculum department at the Ministry of Education.

In the past, students were introduced to English language study at grade four of the elementary level when the students were approximately nine years old. However, a major change in the English language curriculum took place. In 1992, English was introduced to grade one and it is estimated that it will take another seven years before these students join the university. The lower primary students (one to three) take an average of seventy hours of English during the academic year; the upper primary and the preparatory take an average of one hundred hours. At the secondary level, the arts students have an average of one hundred and twenty contact hours per year, and the science students complete an average of one hundred and ten.

At present the freshmen who join the English program at the university are placed in three proficiency levels for a one-semester course for each level. These are false beginner, low intermediate, and intermediate.

There are over 3000 teachers of English in the state schools and 55 supervisors. Almost all come from different Arab countries. The teachers are either BA holders or have completed a two-year diploma in education. The supervisors are BA or MA holders with many years of teaching experience. Some are hired as supervisors without any teaching experience in the UAE. Others, after many years of teaching experience in the UAE, are promoted to supervisors after passing a written and an oral exam conducted at a national level for Lead Teachers in the State schools. Each supervisor supervises between fifty to sixty teachers. The role of the Supervisor is to observe the teachers at least twice a year for professional development and rehiring purposes. The Supervisor also offers and organizes in-service training sessions and workshops for the group of teachers he/she supervises. The 55 supervisors report to the Chief Supervisor, who acts as a Coordinator and has an office in the Ministry. The Ministry of Education has nine educational districts in the country.

2.2. Course Development

The course for supervisors was initiated following the success of a series of in-service training workshops offered to teachers in the Al Ain Educational District. The Ministry initially considered a similar course for teachers all over the country, but for financial and logistical purposes, it was considered more practical to group the supervisors and expose them to the Teacher Training Course. The supervisors will in turn use the course to train the teachers in their respective educational districts.

The feedback from the workshops offered to the Al Ain teachers was highly valuable for the course design and content. A needs analysis was conducted by consulting a number of supervisors for their feedback on the course content. The Chief Supervisor was also contacted for input. He was also asked to review and revise the course content before development. The topics on critical thinking and learner autonomy skills were introduced in order to share with the teachers and the supervisors the work done at the University to upgrade those skills in students entering the university from the state schools.

Overall, the course was designed and developed with the UAE student profile in mind. The Ministry of Education curriculum and materials were used to make the course as practical and as hands-on as possible.

3. Description

3.1. Course Organization

The course had twenty-four training sessions. It was offered each Wednesday over two semesters in two locations, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, to make it as convenient as possible for both the participants and the trainers. Each training session was three hours long. An hour and a half was devoted to the advanced language component of the course, while the remaining time was allocated to a methodological issue. The two components were designed to complement each other. While the advanced language component aimed at upgrading English language proficiency, the methodology component focused on providing the supervisors with hands-on content which could be adapted for classroom use.

3.2. Course Content (Methodology Part)

1. Listening Strategies
2. Using Videos
3. Reading Strategies
4. Writing Strategies
5. Teaching Grammatical Structures
6. Teaching Vocabulary
7. Strategies for Teaching Speaking and Pronunciation
8. Using Visual Aids
9. Role Play
10. Lesson Plans
11. Classroom Management
12. Group and Pair work
13. Classroom Language
14. Testing and Assessment
15. Textbook Evaluation
16. Syllabus Design and Materials Production
17. Arab Learners Errors and Error Correction
18. Introduction to Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)
19. Motivation and Learner Autonomy
20. Critical Thinking
21. Self Access and Independent Learning
22. Classroom Observation and Peer Observation
23. Teacher Evaluation
24. Supervision

3.3. Course Characteristics

The course was designed specifically for UAE students, teachers and supervisors with the ultimate aim of better preparing students for university studies. The overwhelming majority of the students joining the UAE University are Ministry of Education school graduates, and the course offered the opportunity for trainers and trainees to address common student needs. Most of the trainers were familiar with the schools' environment and facilities. They had previously had contact with supervisors via workshops and professional development events offered throughout the country. Previously held training sessions for supervisors at a national level were offered by Western trainers usually not very familiar with the UAE educational environment and the needs of the students and their educators.

The course had a practical focus and was delivered in a workshop style. The intention was to give the supervisors materials, training and teaching techniques that they could use in training their teachers. The teachers, in turn, could use the materials and techniques in the classroom. The English Language Curriculum Document for Basic and Secondary Education states that "training courses will... eschew the lecturing approach and concentrate on practical, workshop activities..." (1994, p.53). The course materials were, therefore, taken directly from the students' textbooks. The workshop style of delivery was deliberately chosen to involve the trainees and allow them to experience the activities. In many of the activities, the supervisors took the role of students and performed a variety of activities in all language skills (see course contents).

The course offered opportunities for the supervisors to access the university resources, facilities and materials. Some of the sessions were offered on the university campuses where the trainees were briefed on the curriculum of the university English program, the methodology and the curriculum support activities to show them the teaching and learning environment their students would be joining after leaving secondary school. The course also offered the opportunity for educators from the university and the Ministry of Education to meet and exchange experiences and expertise in the area of TEFL, and, most importantly, to discuss and address the UAE learners' needs. The course has developed a productive professional development environment that will, it is hoped, spread to all the teachers.

The trainers were UAE University teachers with MA and Ph.D. qualifications in TEFL and many years of experience in training teachers and trainers. All the trainers had at least two years of teaching experience in the UAE. Therefore, they had a good understanding of the students' profile and learning needs.

The course was designed to target the three thousand teachers of English in the UAE through training their supervisors, who were each required to train the fifty to sixty teachers under their supervision. Direct training of the teachers may have been more beneficial, but it would not have been cost-effective in either time or money.

4. Distinguishing Features

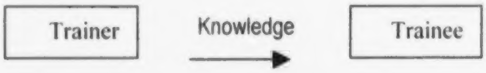
Among the distinguishing features of the course are the process approach and the management style selected for the training sessions.

4.1. A Process Approach

Considering the professional experience of most of the supervisors and their academic background, some of them with Masters degrees in Applied Linguistics, the general approach adopted for the training sessions was a process approach. The philosophy behind this approach is that both the trainer and the trainee are equal partners and participants in a learning experience (Woodward, 1992; Parrott, 1993). The supervisors' input was solicited prior to and during the training sessions. As mentioned above, the course content was designed after a needs analysis had been conducted. At the beginning of the course, supervisors were provided with a complete plan of the sessions. They were asked prior to every session to read (if they had the time and resources) and give some thoughts about the content.

When asked about the training sessions they usually give to their teachers, some of the supervisors mentioned two approaches: the exposé and the lecture approach. In the exposé approach the supervisor assigns a number of topics or questions to the teachers who would prepare an exposé. This involves reading, taking notes, and preparing a talk. The teacher would then give a presentation to his/her colleagues in one of the in-service training sessions. The floor would then be opened for discussion of the topic.

The supervisors are also responsible for organizing and managing training sessions. These are done either in the form of a lecture or a workshop. Most of these workshops deal with classroom management, but can extend to include such issues as classroom discourse, language interference, and error analysis. The exposé style of in-service training no doubt helps teachers keep up with pedagogical development and exchange teaching ideas. It does, however, have some limitations. The participant in an exposé or a lecture training session is supposed to be a receiver of knowledge poured into his/her mind by the trainer. Parrott (1993) mentions the Jug and Mug approach. This metaphor explicitly describes a whole tradition of educational training:



This style was avoided during our training sessions. One of the goals of the course was to provide the supervisors with a variety of training styles.

The general goals of the training sessions are as follows:

- Raise awareness and share experiences.
- Clarify certain issues and concepts.
- Give assistance when needed.
- Boost a feeling of professionalism

Because it was thought that the trainees joined the program as participants and not as passive knowledge receivers, we avoided spotlight presentations and favored open discussions of the course content. The participants, however, did expect some kind of product in the form of a set of guidelines, handouts, summaries, and references for future use in in-service training sessions with their teachers (see appendices A, B, C). The variety of the training processes included the use of whole group discussions, workshops, brainstorming sessions, and situational tasks. For example, in a session on motivation and independent

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

learning the trainees were presented with the following situation: how would you help a teacher who tells you " my students are not motivated, they hate English, and some of them are disrupting the lessons"?

In most of the sessions we conducted, a task-based approach was followed. The participants engaged in group or pair work to work on a particular task. The length of the task depended on the nature of the topic at hand. Some of the materials were developed by the trainers to meet the goals of some of the sessions. We also made use of some professional texts such as the tasks developed by Parrott (1993).

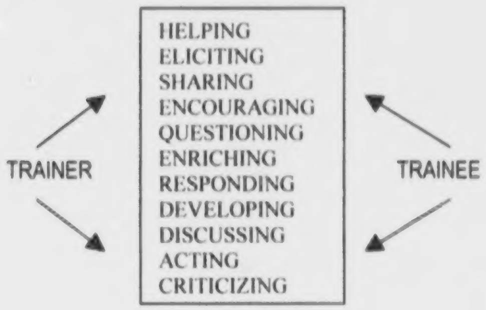
4.2. Classroom Management

Classroom management was a particularly important issue during the whole course. Because of the nature of the course and the academic and professional levels of the trainees, there was a concern about how to manage a group of trainers. It was made explicit at the beginning of many sessions that the trainees should not expect " correct" answers to the tasks and questions they had to deal with. In fact, once this concept was established we felt that they were encouraged to participate and were willing to put forward suggestions and recommendations for future sessions. The emphasis was more on the exchange of ideas and on thinking through several issues than on coming to final conclusions. The challenges of this process approach were reflected in the managing of the discussion tasks and the small group work. Because the trainees had a lot to say about all the topics of the course, there was a risk of getting carried away during discussions. This was managed by planning the main points of the discussion ahead of time and by displaying them on a white board. During group discussions the trainer had to make sure that all the trainees had an equal chance of participation. On many occasions participants with tendencies to dominate discussions were assigned roles as group leaders in charge of taking notes, keeping the agenda, and reporting to the whole group. This was an attempt to ensure the discussion did not diverge from the main point and to encourage the quieter trainees to participate.

Activities and discussion tasks were always " rounded up" by the trainers in various ways. This took place after the participants had reported back their work to each other. The trainer would add some points to those raised by the trainees, if considered necessary, and sum up the lesson. Parrott (1993) warns against assuming that the trainer has to add points to the discussion. He states that one has to be " circumspect in doing this as the points which seem crucial or even obvious to the trainer may well not be appropriate to the participants at their particular stage in thinking through the issues" (p. 13).

The following graph describes the process approach of the training sessions:

THE PROCESS APPROACH



Various types of equipment were used throughout the course: video, audio cassette recorder, OHP, computers, boards, cards, textbooks and posters.

5. Evaluation

The evaluation of the supervisors' training course has attempted to assess the extent to which the course content and delivery style have met the goals initially set for the course. It was also used to assess the training sessions and their relevance to the supervisors and the environment in which they worked. Three types of evaluation instruments were developed in the course design.

The first was the evaluation of each session. Each supervisor was given an evaluation form at the end of each training session that mainly addressed its usefulness and relevance to the course goals. The course coordinator in collaboration with the two senior trainers in the program acted on the recommendations and made any necessary changes.

Second, there was a mid-course evaluation where the supervisors were offered the opportunity to discuss the course as a group with the trainers. The open group evaluation was also very valuable for the trainers. In this session the supervisors communicated their area of expertise as supervisors, where they asked for more sessions on supervision and classroom observation. This request was included in the second part of the course.

Third, there was an end-of-course evaluation which took place during the final course session, before the graduation ceremony. The fifty-five supervisors were divided into three groups with one of the senior trainers as a facilitator. The task was to evaluate the course through discussion at the end of which they filled in a form that addressed the course's strengths and weaknesses, the usefulness of the materials and techniques they were exposed to and their suggestions for areas of future cooperation between the university and the Ministry of Education. Overall, the supervisors felt that a more elaborate and thorough needs analysis should have been conducted before the beginning of the course. This needs analysis would have directed the trainers to a better understanding of the supervisors' needs, their working environment, and the resources available to them. The supervisors also believed that some of the materials were not tailored to the needs of the teachers in the UAE and their local situations. They thought that the materials of the course should have been based more on the students' textbooks. They believed that some of the materials were repeated in some sessions of the course and that innovation was not always sought in the selection. Because they knew that the university trainers were academics and had access to better library facilities, the supervisors expressed preference for some academic texts adapted from newly published literature in the area of training and supervision. They also considered that with twenty-four sessions the course was too long.

The feedback from this evaluation session was productive, positive, and valuable. It generated useful insights for future training programs for the Ministry of Education. Overall, the supervisors felt that the course was a productive forum where they had the opportunity for extensive discussion with the trainers about the needs of the students and the teachers. In addition, the trainers gained a better understanding of the educational environments and the challenges facing students, teachers, and supervisors. A channel of communication has been established between the two institutions and as a result of the course the ministry of education requested a similar program to train the English supervisors in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) programs.

6. Practical Ideas

Even though this teacher education program was designed specifically to answer UAE supervisors' training needs, the overall design and approach selected for the program can be of benefit to teacher educators in various contexts. The following are some practical ideas:

- In countries with national EFL curricula it might not be practical to train all teachers directly. A solution is to train a group of senior teachers, coordinators, supervisors, or inspectors to train the rest of the teachers in smaller groups.
- Any teacher education course should be based on a thorough and well designed needs analysis involving trainees, administrators and decision makers.
- If possible, the trainees should be involved in choosing the content of the course. This will ensure their interest and the maximum of benefit for them.
- To motivate trainees, the training sessions should depart from what they already know. They should also be encouraged to share their experiences and expertise.
- The training sessions should be as practical as possible. Most teachers prefer classroom tips and dislike theoretical content. The appendices should provide the reader with a clear idea of a lesson plan.
- The trainers should familiarize themselves with the cultural and professional background of the trainees.
- An evaluation carried out mid-way through the course will help all groups involved reflect upon the training and make necessary changes.
- A post course evaluation will help the participants check whether the course has met its objectives.

Conclusion

Without attending the supervisors' training sessions of their teachers, it would be difficult to assess the extent to which the supervisors have really benefited from the course and the relevance of the course materials to the teachers. It would also be difficult to measure how much of these materials were used in training the teachers. Finally, to assess the effect of the course on the teachers, the ultimate target, one would have to observe the teachers after they have been trained by their supervisors.

The university and the Ministry of Education should consider cooperation in the area of curriculum and testing by setting common goals and objectives for the teaching of English. The university's goals would become the continuation of the ministry's goals. Experts from both institutions need to work together in designing and developing student textbooks, teacher manuals, teaching aids, and supplementary materials. The supervisors also communicated the need for the university to assist with the upgrading of the testing policies and procedures presently used.

The supervisors' course marked the first direct contribution of university TEFL lecturers in the training of their colleagues from secondary and elementary schools. They shared their expertise and learned about the process of teacher education in the U AE. The challenges met during the course will certainly help in the design of future teacher education programs.

Appendix A

Supervisors' Course
Role Play and Simulation

Objective: the aim of this session is to discuss the place of role play and simulation in the English syllabus. The participants will take part in a role play and a simulation and then debrief the two activities.

Role Play: suppose you are given the following role card:

> You bought a pair of shoes two days ago. You have discovered two scratches in them. Take them back to the shop and explain the problem. You do not want another pair, you want your money back. Be polite at all times.

In this role play the learner might be free to choose the language to use and his/her attitude but the way the situation develops, and its eventual outcome have been decided. The student is playing (performing) an assigned role.

Aspects of role behaviour involved in role play

Degree of formality: This depends on the context. Talking to a stranger "Excuse me, could you tell me where the town hall is?"
talking to a friend: "where's the town hall, then?"
" Good morning, Mr. Ahmed" talking to a boss

"Hi there" talking to a friend.

Register: specific features of language. e.g. occupational register. two medical doctors talking about their work will use many words and phrases from the field of medicine. this makes it very difficult for a listener not familiar with the field to understand.
for role plays: students can, for example, be exposed to doctor-patient discourse, car mechanic, etc.

Function: do we wish to express an opinion, agree or disagree, to persuade or complain?. In any role learners will need a variety of functions.

Attitude: how we feel towards the situation and other people. Learners can be shown how to make clear what their feelings are (delight, anger, surprise, confusion, etc.). They also must learn how to recognize these feelings in their interlocutors. "I'm afraid 1 have a complaint to make " is polite while " this is too much", said after the fourth time one complained about the same goods, reveals frustration and anger.

Para-linguistic features: language has to be selected and said correctly. Stress, intonation, rhythm, tone of voice, speed of delivery, pitch, and loudness have to be taken into consideration.

Extra-linguistic features: In face-to-face interaction, it is important to know the appropriate gestures and facial expressions which accompany the language. Body language is culturally defined, British people, for instance, shake hands on fewer occasions then the Arabs.

Preparing a role play

Selection: the teacher has to select a role play that meets students' language needs.
For a beginner level class, a shopping situation is appropriate.

Situation: In a shop
Roles: Customer and shop assistant
Formality: Formal
Attitudes: Neutral, polite
Language functions: Asking for goods.
Asking for, and giving, prices.
Asking for, and giving, amounts.

New material (linguistic preparation)
Requisite learner knowledge.
Names of common shop goods.
Names of shops selling these.
Names of amounts (half a kilo, a pound).
Names of packaging (a packet, a jar, etc.).
difference between number and amount (much/many).
The English monetary system.

Polite requests for goods.

Assumed knowledge

It is assumed that before the preparation, the learners know:
Numbers to 100.
Greetings ('good morning, goodbye', etc.).
'Please', 'thank you', 'here you are'.
a way of asking the 'name' of things in English (e.g. 'What's this called in English?').
the question, can you?. (e.g. 'Can you buy apples at the ----------?').

Requisite teaching aids

Pictures or realia of common shop goods, price tags, toy English money, pictures of the shops to be mentioned, role play cards, a model dialogue.

Situational and cultural preparation (e.g., ways of greeting, non-verbal behaviour)

Factual preparation (where you can buy things).

Students should be given enough time for practice.

Follow-up

Problems with role play

Time: the above beginner role play might take up to four hours of class preparation.
Organization: the setting can be a problem, tables cannot be moved.
Samples of Role plays

You are on holiday in England. You bought an expensive dictionary (for your English classes!) two days ago. You have discovered that 20 pages are blank (show them to the assistant). You have lost the receipt. You want your money Back.

You work in bookshop. Ask the customer if you can help him/her. Ask if he/she is sure the book was bought in your shop. Ask for the receipt. Offer to order a new dictionary (you have no copies left).

You lost a -----------on the train/bus to ---------- yesterday at -----------(time). Go to the lost property office. Describe what you lost (colour, size, material, etc.). None of the --------s the attendant shows you are yours. Ask him/her what you should do now.

You are the attendant at a lost property office. Ask the person what he/she has lost, and where/when it was lost. Ask him/her to describe the object in detail. Show him/her some objects. Suggest he/she comes back tomorrow.

You meet ----------- in the street. You are fine. Ask --------if he/she would like a cup of tea/coffee in a café. There is a nice café in----------street.

You go to a restaurant with---------. Ask about a table. Ask---------- what he/she wants. Ask if he/she wants a drink with the meal. Order the food and drink. Pay the bill.

You go to a restaurant with------------. Look at the menu and tell-----------what you would like to eat and drink.

You are the waiter. You have a table for two. Give the customers a menu. Take their order. Give them the bill.

You are in a new town, at the railway station. You want to go to the Palace Hotel. Stop someone and ask the way.

You are at the railway station. Help the tourist.

Go to a travel agency and book a flight to Cairo. Ask for accommodation and tours.

You are a travel agent. Help a customer who wants to have information about travel and accommodation.

Appendix B

Supervisors' Course
Attitudes, Motivation and Learner Autonomy

Objective: the aim of this session is to discuss the roles of attitudes and motivation in learning a foreign language. We will also discuss ways of increasing learner autonomy.

Attitudes and Motivation: They are both considered as affective factors in language learning. The two terms are not always clearly distinguished in applied linguistics literature. Attitudes and motivation have been lumped together as factors responsible for relative success or failure in foreign language learning.

Attitude: Ajzen (1988) defines attitude as "a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or an event" (p. 4). Attitudes include three elements:

Cognitive component: beliefs about the object.
Affective component: amount of positive or negative feeling one has towards the object.
Conative component: one's behavioural intentions, or one's actual behaviour towards the object.
Attitudes are learned and therefore capable of changing by further learning.

Motivation: Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified two types of motivation:

Instrumental Motivation: the purposes of language study reflect the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement, such as getting ahead in one's occupation.
Integrative Motivation: the learner wishes to learn more about the other cultural community

because he I she is interested in it in an open-minded way to the point of eventually being accepted as a member of that group (p. 3).

The relation of attitude to motivation is dependent on the type of motivation. An integrative motivation presupposes a positive attitude towards the target language and culture. A learner who is instrumentally motivated does not necessarily have a positive attitude.

Learner Autonomy

Autonomous learning is a matter of a learning style but it can be fostered and encouraged. A learning style is an individual predisposition to learn in a particular way.

Syllabus free/bound learners: Syllabus free learners are believed to learn from elements in the general learning context and outside it whereas syllabus-bound learners require the packaging and presentation of data which the teacher provides.

Task A: Motivation (see handouts).

Task B: Learner Autonomy (see handouts).

These two tasks are just a suggestion of how to run a training session (discussion) about motivation and learner autonomy. We will discuss other ways of managing training sessions.

Please note that the purpose of these tasks is to raise awareness of such topics. As participants are experienced and come from different backgrounds, the trainer's role is to facilitate discussions and not to provide right or wrong answers.

References

Ajzen, 1. (1988). *Attitudes, Perspectives, and Behavior.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Gardner, R. and Lambert, W. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning.* Rowley, Mass.

Appendix C

Supervisors' Course
Textbook Evaluation

Objective: the aim of this session is to discuss some of the current principles in textbook evaluation and conduct a mini evaluation of several textbooks.

1. Rationale for textbook evaluation
    pre-course evaluation
    post-course evaluation

2. Textbook as syllabus?

3. Basic principles for materials evaluation

   A. Relate the teaching materials to your aims and objectives. (The aims of a teaching programme should determine the course materials to be used and not vice-versa).

   B. Be aware of what language is for and select teaching materials which will help equip your students to language effectively for their own purpose (try to distinguish between e.g., participation in a language drill, a coursebook dialogue or a role-play and the ability to carry through a real transaction. Does the text prepare the learners to express their feelings and attitudes about real things or events? look at the ministry books (different levels) and decide if they perform this function.

   C. Keep your students learning needs in mind
   How is language selected, graded, presented, and practiced?
   How are learning units presented? Are they related to each other? can learners relate new language items to what they already know?
   Does the text help stimulate the learners? is it intellectually stimulating? Is it usable with small groups and pairs?

   D. Consider the relationship between language, the learning process and the learner

   The text must have a balance between the needs of the learner as an individual and the linguistic difficulties inherent in language learning.

4. Selection and grading of language items
   Structural and functional approaches
   Subject-centred approach and student-centred approach

Grading: the speed with which the learners progress, how much new material is introduced in a new unit, how close together or how far apart new grammatical structures are in relation to each other, and how much vocabulary is introduced in each unit. How much of practice material is provided and in what form? (role-play, dialogue, drill...).

Recycling: is there adequate recycling of new items. Lexical items, for example, are best learned when they are recycled five or six times.

Linear progression and cyclical progression.

A text with a linear progression deals with each item exhaustively before passing on to the other item.
A text with a cyclical progression moves fairly quickly from one language item to another and

then progressively returns to each item throughout the text.

5. Mini evaluation session: group work

Participants will evaluate textbooks according to one or two evaluation principles.

How far do you think the objectives which you identified are appropriate for the learning needs of the students for whom the coursebook was designed?

Presentation session.

Note: These appendices are samples of activities and guidelines that were used during the training course.

References

Ajzen, 1. (1988). *Attitudes, Perspectives and Behavior.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Gardner, R. and Lambert, W. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning.* Rowley, Mass.

Parrott, M. (1993). *Tasks for Language Teachers: A resource book for training and development.* Cambridge: C.U.P.

The Ministry of Education (1994). *The English Language Curriculum Document for Basic and Secondary Education.*

Woodward, T. (1992). *Ways of Training..* Harlow. Longman.

Learner Behaviour in Large ESL Classes

MOHAMMAD ATHAR KHAN
Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

1.0 Introduction

Teaching of English as a second language is a vast enterprise. In the commonwealth countries, including India, it is taught at various levels of education. In almost all these countries, the phenomenal expansion that has taken place in extending educational opportunities has seriously affected the teaching of English. English is taught in difficult circumstances: large classes full of heterogeneous students, inadequate courses and teaching materials, badly equipped classrooms, and poorly trained or untrained teachers are some of the problems. Yet in spite of these problems and difficulties several students who study in these teaching-learning conditions still manage to learn English well. How does this happen? What could be the reasons for their success? There is perhaps a strong need to explore these questions.

My study, however, focussed on a comparatively small issue, that is, learner behaviour in large classes. The study aimed to look closely at a typical large class in India and an attempt was made to identify the behavioural patterns of these students.

"Large class" is a term which appears to be self-explanatory. Most people take it to mean a class consisting of a large number of students. But how many students make a class large ? This is an issue which is debated quite often (Nolasco and Arthur, 1988 and Coleman, 1989) and there appears to be no agreement.

In India, at secondary level, it is a class of over 80 students which is termed as large. However, what is also important to consider along with the number of students in the class are the conditions which accompany a large class: small dingy rooms, congested seats, ill equipped classrooms with only a small blackboard as the teaching aid, little space for the teacher to move or interact with the students, etc. One may ask: How do learners put up with these conditions ? They have no choice, perhaps. But what is also important to know is learners' behaviour in large classes. By 'behaviour' I do not mean only the observable physical responses they exhibit but also the implicit responses to the surroundings or the context as expressed in their actions or activities. Therefore, the term "learner behaviour" in this study includes the socio-affective as well as the cognitive strategies the learners employ while learning.

1.1 The background to the study

All the countries in the world are spending more and more of their resources on education nowadays. However, the increase in educational expenditure has not had much effect on educational opportunities available, as there has been a corresponding increase in the number of students: the educational system cannot cope with the demand and, therefore, it appears that large classes are inevitable. Thus, English will continue to get taught in large classes for many years to come and this fact should be accepted by teachers. However, teachers find it difficult to get reconciled because the developments that have taken place in the language pedagogy in recent years advocate approaches and methods which one finds difficult to employ in large classes. Needs based courses, learner – centred methodology and learner autonomy are some of the key terms in English language teaching literature (Dickinson, 1987). The importance of interaction in learning and the need to promote learner interaction in the class is emphasised by almost everyone (Seliger, 1983, and Ellis, 1986). These principles remain as precepts for most teachers in countries like India where especially at the intermediate or undergraduate level a class of over 90-100 students is a norm. Even at the school level the classes are quite large in some states. Teachers find it difficult to implement some of the techniques they are often advised to employ during training programmes. Techniques such as group-work, role-play, asking students to carry out silent reading in class, providing individual feedback to learners on their written work/speech errors, etc. are difficult to practice when the classroom is packed with students, teaching resources are limited, courses do not cater to the heterogeneous needs of the students, and examinations can be passed easily by the students. Large classes are a problem for all teachers. They are a problem for the learners too, as they fail to get appropriate opportunities for language learning. The encouragement and feedback which they should receive as individual learners is also not available to them.

1.2 The Rationale for the Study

Language learning in large classes is an area of research which has not been explored fully. While instructed language learning or classroom second language learning (Long, 1983) has been recognized as an area worth studying, unfortunately the language learning issues which arise in the context of large classes have not been addressed in these studies. On language teaching in large classes there is some literature available (Coleman, 1989:1). However, the addressee in these writings is generally the teacher who is given advice on how to handle large classes (Nolasco and Arthur 1988). The Lancaster-Leeds project (1989) represents perhaps the only serious attempt which has been made to study systematically the complex problems of teaching and learning in large classes. The project team has produced 12 reports and identified research questions such as: teachers' concern with large classes, the extent of the phenomenon of large classes, reasons for the occurrence of large classes, attitudes to large classes, data collection in large class, the performance of leain large classes, strategies in large classes, language acquisition in large classes, and experiments in large classes. However, even in these studies the focus seems to be more on examining the problem from the teacher's perspective. The literature on large classes emanates from 2 sources: the General Educational Research or empirical research (Lindbloom, 1970; Davies 1971; Educational Research Service, USA, 1978; Glass et al 1982) and Pedagogical Research (West, 1960; Forrester 1968; Hubbard et al 1983, Coleman 1989). The review of the literature indicates that while class size is recognised to be a main factor in instruction and achievement, most of the studies which have been conducted deal most with the problems that teachers face while handling large classes, and suggest a number of ways in which the teacher can manage and control large classes. However, the problems of learners in large classes and the question how they should cope with these problems do not seem to be of much concern to these studies.

My study, however, was guided by the belief that the problems and difficulties faced by learners in large classes are equally, if not more important and that there is an urgent need to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

study how learners in large classes cope with the problems. This is especially important if we believe in what we often say, namely, that the learners occupy a primary position in instruction, that teaching should be learner-centered and that the contribution which learners themselves make to their learning is of immense importance.

The research on learning strategies (Naiman, et al 1975; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975 and 1983; Carver, 1984; Bialystock 1978 and 1981; Tarone, 1977 and 1983; Seliger, 1982; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, Cohen, 1990; Ehraman and Oxford, 1989; Oxford and Crookall, 1989; Oxford, 1993) indicates the strong need to carry out such research in actual teaching - learning situations especially in contexts which are considered to be difficult or hostile for language learning. Large classes provide one such context but unfortunately, as reported above, not enough attention has been paid to the learner factor in large classes.

Thus I felt that there is a strong need to conduct investigations on how learners respond in large classes. However, while carrying out this investigation my focus was not merely on their cognitive skills or strategies they employ but also on aspects of affective and social behaviour. Further, it is not only what is observable physically in the classroom which should be of importance, but also their behaviour before and after the class. That explains my choice of wider term 'learner behaviour' instead of 'learner strategies' in this study.

1.3 The Aims of the Study

The study was aimed at carrying out an investigation into the learner behaviour in large classes. In this study an attempt was made to find out how learners try to cope with the problems of studying in large classes. It was assumed that the findings of the study may help organise better instructional activities in a large class and also perhaps give ideas about equipping learners in large classes with strategies to cope with the problems.

1.4 The Research Questions

The study focussed mainly on learners and their behaviour in large classes. However, learner behaviour cannot be studied in isolation without taking into consideration factors such as the physical features of the classroom, the instructional procedures employed, the course requirements etc. Learner behaviour is a product of all these variables present in the teaching -learning context. Therefore, in the specific context of large class teaching the following were the key research questions proposed for the study.

(i) What are the learners' perceptions about large class situation? Do they view large class as 'problematic'?

(ii) How do they cope with the instructional procedures adopted by teachers in the class?

(iii) What are the strategies they employ outside the class to help them cope with the situation?

In addition, the study also examined the following issues concerning learners' behaviour in the classroom:

- Do learners try to overcome the physical constraints of the large class?
- Do learners try to widen the scope of class room interaction ?
- Do learners try to shape their own interaction with and through the language?
- Do learners make an attempt to actively involve themselves in the classroom processes?
- Do learners try to loosen the teacher controlled framework? If yes, in what way and how?
- Do learners make an attempt to re-shape the role-relationship in a large class?

1.5 Methods of the Study and Data Collection

This study was an exploratory study which was undertaken to find out learners' behaviour in large classes. My study involved learners of age group 16-18 years at senior secondary level. I started my study with some initial questions. I decided to conduct a pilot study first in order to get a first hand experience of the large class problem. During the pilot study, besides observing a few large classes in English as well as content subjects, I talked to teachers and learners individually to find out their perceptions of the problem. The pilot study evolved into a suitable research design and also enabled me to prepare the research instruments for the main study.

Both during the pilot as well as the main study I used a multi-pronged approach to data collection. I collected data from sustained classroom observations supported by audio-recording and learner questionnaires (most items on which were open-ended). I also later interviewed learners in order to probe them more on some of the issues suggested by them in the questionnaire responses. The approach adopted in all these data collection procedures was qualitative. I also made an attempt to obtain and record qualitative statements, inferences, comments etc

I followed the same approach during the stage of data analysis. I examined the data qualitatively, with the emphasis on identifying and organising the rich information obtained from various sources. I carried out some simple quantitative calculations like calculating the percentage for reporting certain types of information. Otherwise, most of the information obtained is qualitative information obtained from classroom observation, learners' questionnaire responses and also learner interviews.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

My study represents an effort to study the complex problem of large classes from the learners' point of view. It is limited and restricted in many ways. In view of the time constraint, I examined only one Large class situation of a senior secondary class. I observed and interviewed only the learners of this class. Therefore, my results obtained pertain only to the limited sample examined. However, since the context chosen is representative in many ways and I have made an attempt to probe the situation deeply and obtain intensive information, the generalizations arrived at the end of this study, perhaps, do apply to other contexts as well.

2.0 Findings of the study

The results that I obtained from each research tool i.e. classroom observations, learner questionnaires, and learner interviews were put together and examined against each other to see how far the findings obtained from one source supported or strengthened the other findings. Finally, I put all the findings together in terms of some categories and organised them under headings and sub-headings. I also made an attempt to relate these to the research questions raised in my study.

The findings obtained from different research instruments confirmed the results obtained from each research instrument. At the same time, I found that the results converge on many points to suggest an emerging set of strategies and classification system in terms of learner behavior in large classes. I realised that there are a number of 'during the class'; 'pre-class and 'post-class' strategies which learners employ in order to make up for the deficiencies of the instructional process in large classes. I have presented below a list of learner behavior observed which my study seems to suggest.

Table 1

Learner Behaviour		
Inside the classroom	**Outside the classroom**	
◆ Seat location strategies	**Pre-class Preparation Strategies**	**Post-class Revision Strategies**
◆ Distraction avoiding strategies	* Reading the lesson	* Consulting teachers
◆ Involvement strategies	* Bringing doubts to class	* Talking to students
◆ Attention seeking strategies	* Practicing answers	* Reading the lesson
◆ Attention maintaining strategies	* Co-operating with peers	* Note-taking
◆ Questioning strategies		* Resourcing
◆ Response giving strategies		* Memorization
◆ Feedback strategies		* Practice Activities
◆ Dominating strategies		
◆ Note-taking strategies		
◆ Co-operating (with peers) strategies		
◆ Building relations.		

2.1 Inside the class room behaviour

Learner behaviour was observed in terms of the following categories. I cross checked the patterns noticed in learner behaviour, inside the classroom, through leaner responses in the questionnaire. To validate these findings and also to gain more information I focussed attention on some of these aspects in the interview too. Finally, a list of categories emerged, shown in Table 1. In each category I have presented the characteristic pattern of the behaviour.

2.1.1 Seat location strategies

Students in the class were not sitting on fixed seats. Every time a new teaching session began they had to locate a seat. Here are some very interesting patterns of behaviour were noticed among students.

- Most students preferred to sit on front benches. This showed the desire on their part to be close enough to the teacher to :
    - Look at the teacher
    - Listen to the teacher
    - Talk to the teacher
    - Gain teacher's attention
- Sit wherever it's comfortable to:
    - Stretch legs
    - Move around a little bit
- Sit near bright or clever students
- Sit wherever teacher looks quite often

2.1.2 Distraction Avoiding Strategies

Since the learners in large classes understand the conditions that help one learn, they arrange for the presence of those conditions. This probably explains their behaviour in distraction avoiding strategies.

- Avoid sitting on back benches.
- Avoid sitting inattentive and uninterested students.
- Avoid sitting near window or door (source of heightened noise).
- Avoid places of private talk.

2.1.3 Involvement Strategies

Students were found involving themselves in interaction whenever the teacher provided an opportunity, but it was also observed that very few such opportunities were provided by the teacher. In one of the many classes that I recorded and transcribed, though the number of teacher turns was equal to the number of student turns, the number of words spoken by the teacher was 2437 compared to 24 words spoken by the students.

Class A	No. of Words spoken By		Words spoken in terms of %		No. of turns taken by	
	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student
	2437	24	99.02	0.98	13	13

Table 2. Number of words/lexical items used and the turns taken by the teachers and learners.

This shows that learner talk was limited and restricted because of no one – to - one correspondence between the number of turns and the number of words spoken.

Learners were found to involve themselves in the interaction whenever the teacher provided an opportunity, through:

- One word answer
- Yes/No answers
- Short answers
- Building upon the answers

As learners are not provided opportunities to talk, they probably find 'reading aloud with the teacher' as a strategy which help them participate in classroom proceedings and also enable them to concentrate in classroom.

2.1.4 Attention Seeking Strategies

It was observed that many learners were willing to participate but only those could participate who were sitting on front benches or who were called by name by the teacher. In such a situation, where the learners are ignored by the teacher, they exhibited certain non-verbal behaviour to seek teacher's attention. Their efforts are reflected in attention seeking strategies.

- Facial expressions: expression of understanding on the face.
- Head movements: nodding the head to indicate understanding.
- Raising hands: to direct teachers attention to make their presence felt.

The two most interesting strategies observed were:

- Pretending to be intelligent:

> "I know that I don't know the answer but even then I give an impression to the teacher that I want to answer. This helps me to attempt answering the questions next time"
> (Learner 11)

- Smiling /Giggling to get teachers attention.

2.1.5 Attention Maintaining Strategies

Maintaining attention to teacher's talk is difficult in crowded classrooms. Private talks, laughing at wrong responses, reading novels, magazines, doing assignments, disturbing others were found to be of high frequency of occurrence. So some learners were found maintaining attention by:

- Requesting co-learners not to talk while the teacher is teaching.
- Asking for help in answering the teacher's questions.
- Keeping away from distracting company.
- Listening attentively by ignoring disturbances and distractions.

2.1.6 Questioning Strategies

There were quite a few instances when students took the initiative but their questions were either not heard or deliberately ignored by the teacher. Only those questions which were asked as a follow up of the teacher-initiated interaction could get the attention of the teacher. In such a situation, some very interesting questioning strategies adopted by learners were observed:

- Relating their question to teacher's questions.
- Questions prepared in advance were asked.
- Conference type questioning: Some learners were quite often found to write questions on a piece of paper and pass on to the teacher.

2.1.7 Response Giving strategies

In large classes where teacher talk is much more than the learner talk put together, the use of a variety of response giving strategies is inevitable. Some of the behavioural pattern observed were:

- Responding to the teacher initiated turn only, because they felt otherwise their efforts would be curtailed.
- Responding out of turn. This shows they are highly motivated.
- Responding only when sure of the correctness of the answer.
- Responding through co-learners help.

2.1.8 Feed back strategies

Learners were found making conscious use of certain strategies to obtain feedback from the teacher.

- Listening very carefully to the correction made by the teacher.
- Some learners answer teacher's questions even when they know that their answer is not correct. They do so to get the feedback from the teacher or another learner.

2.1.9 Dominating Strategies

In light of the fact that very few opportunities are available to the learners in large classes to interact, some dominating behaviour was noticed:

- Being aggressive.
- Shouting Madam, Madam
- Standing up to answer.

The aggressive behaviour in their attitude is to capture or create an opportunity to talk/participate in interaction. To quote a leaner.

> " I have to respond whether teacher asks me question or not. If I sit quietly I'll never get the chance to talk in the class. Because of this at times teacher 'stares' at me, at times she 'smiles'. I enjoy both"
>
> (Learner 23)

2.1.10 Note-taking strategies

In the absence of teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction in large classes, the most observable type of learner behaviour observed during the class was learner material interaction. This gets exhibited in 'note-taking strategies.

- Marking important lines in the text.
- Writing only what they feel is important.
- Writing detailed notes.
- Writing word meanings.
- Highlighting important part in the text.

The number of learners exhibiting note-taking strategies is very high.

2.1.11 Co-Operating (with peers) strategies

Some learners feel the need of cooperation among learners to cope with the problems of large classes. They appeared to be interacting with each other while listening to the teacher or while trying to answer teachers' questions. This they did by:

- Seeking each others help in answering.
- Discussing / helping each other.
- Quiz-team like effort (core-group).

2.1.12 Building Relations

Some learners make friends with good learners and sit with them in the class, talk to them in the class for the purpose of learning. One learner wrote in the questionnaire:

> " I don't like Shalini but I talk to her because she knows good English "
>
> (Learner 9)

2.2 Outside the Classroom Behaviour

Since I observed during the pilot study that the learners were well aware of the problems in the large classes and did also know about the limitations of the instructional procedures

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

adopted in these classes, I wanted to find out from them how they cope with the problems. Hence I tried to find from the learners if they adopted any specific techniques before or after the class.

From the responses to the questionnaire and interviews I found that:

- Learners adopt more post- lesson techniques than pre-lesson techniques.
- The post and pre-lesson techniques they use are different but sometimes overlapping.

I have listed and discussed the strategies the learners adopt to supplement classroom instructional procedures.

2.2.1 Pre-Class Preparation Strategies

The strategies that have emerged in this category can be found in smaller classes too, but the frequency of their occurrence is very high in the context of large classes.

2.2.1.1Reading the lesson

The learners adopt different ways of reading the lesson before they come to the class

- Word by word
- Summary of the lesson.

This they do to

- Know the contents of the lesson.
- To facilitate comprehension in the classroom.
- To answer questions in the classroom.

This shows that reading the lesson before the class is basically a 'coping' strategy which learners employ in large classes.

2.2.1.2 Bringing doubts to the class

The learners view large classes as a place where genuine spontaneous doubt clarification is not possible, therefore they

- Prepare a set of questions before hand to get clarified in the class.
- Focus attention on textual problems identified earlier.

2.2.1.3 Practicing answers

Learners usually adopt very few pre-class strategies but if they do they make effective use of them in preparing themselves for better performance in the classrooms. They do so by:

- Posing expected questions to one-self
- Practice answering these orally and sometimes in written form.

2.2.1.4 Co-operating with peers

The learners of large classes indulge in 'combined study' This happens probably because there's peer pressure in large classes and perhaps they feel that they can never learn in the classroom. Therefore, they study with friends before coming to the class. In short learners co-operate with co-learners (peers) because:

- They feel free to get doubts clarified.
- They don't get opportunities in the classroom to talk or interact.
- They want to avoid peer-pressure in the classroom.

2.2.2 Post-Class Revision strategies

In comparison with the pre-lesson strategies which were very few, post-lesson strategies were found to be more and commonly used by the learners.

Most of the learners wrote in the questionnaire and said during the interviews that they cannot fully depend on the class in order to prepare for the examination. Almost everybody commented on the inadequacies of classroom instruction, that is, inability to concentrate, absence of feedback, difficulties in obtaining teacher's attention etc. They try to compensate by doing follow up work, though not regularly after the class.

2.2.3 Consulting Teachers

Learners of the large class usually get in touch with the teachers outside the class and talk to them. The reasons are:

- to establish personal relations- to make up for lack of personal contact with teachers in classroom. This is evident from one of the responses I got.

> 'I greet the teacher, and meet the teacher outside the class. So that she can care for me in the class, ask me questions, etc. It works you know'.
>
> (Learner 17)

- to ask questions (clarify the doubts) as generally they don't get opportunity in the classroom).
- to give a good impression to the teacher.

2.2.4 Talking to Students

Some learners talk to bright learners after the class and their reasons for doing so were quire interesting.

> 'I don't like Shalini, but I talk to her because she knows good English'.
>
> (Learner 9)

The learners talk to other learners because there's:

- no fear

- no sense of shyness.
- no pressure to perform.

2.2.5 Reading the Lesson

Post lesson reading was found to be a common post class strategy for varying purposes.

- to consolidate what is done in the class
- to write better answers
- to answer questions in the examination.

2.2.6 Note-Making

Some learners find that class-notes sometimes provide them with more information than is presented in the textbook. So they make use of class-notes to expand, add, delete, modify and re-write. This strategy is basically adopted with examinations in mind.

2.2.7 Resourcing

Learners use available reference sources of information like:

- dictionaries
- guide books
- notes of seniors /friends
- grammar books

All this they do to make up for the lack of rich input in large classes. Also the higher number of responses in favour of reference work reflect the deficiencies of instructional procedure in large classes.

2.2.8 Memorization

This is both examination oriented and performance oriented strategy. Some of the reasons for memorisation are:

- to help in examination and tests
- to perform better in language production (rote-learning of some important words, lines from literature).
- to make answers look impressive.

2.2.9 Practice Activities

In the absence of proper feedback and lack of practice opportunities in large classes, learners carry out independent practice activities for the purpose of self evaluation and self monitoring. They do so by:

- Checking oral and written work
- Making corrections

- Practicing speaking
- Re-writing the input information.

The list of strategies discussed above shows that learner behaviour cannot be treated in isolation. It's strongly linked to the learner behaviour outside the class. Therefore it's important to consider what learners do before and after the class in trying to cope with the problems of large classes. In my study, I have found a number of 'during the class', pre-class, and post class strategies which learners employ to make up for the deficiencies of instructional process in large classes. In the next section, I have summarised very briefly my findings, presented the conclusions and implications of the study.

3.0 Conclusions

The research instruments employed in the main study, namely classroom observations, questionnaire and interview studies for identifying learner behavior in large classes yielded results which appear to converge at many points. These results confirm the widely held belief that large classes are problematic for learners in many ways. Learners find it difficult to concentrate and get involved in classroom proceedings. The inaudibility of the teacher's voice, distractions arising because of large number of students, inability to get the teacher's attention, etc. appear as major handicaps from the learners' point of view. The instructional procedures adopted by the teacher are also felt to be inappropriate by many students. Since the classes are largely teacher-dominated and teacher-controlled learners mainly listen to the teacher in the class. Teachers, in their view, do not seem to make any efforts to get them involved in classroom proceedings. Consequently, they hardly interact with the teachers or other learners. Nevertheless, these learners still find ways and means of coping with the constraints.

In my research a classification system of learner behavior has emerged which is specific to large class situations. The 12 strategies under the heading 'Inside the classroom behavior' are also entirely new and quite interesting. Another interesting finding made during this study was that to cope with large classes learners employ some 'preparation strategies' before the class and also some 'revision strategies' after the class. These strategies (outside the classroom) may be found in other classroom contexts but they become more important in large class situation for the following reasons:

(i) They are basically 'coping strategies' for large class situation.

(ii) Their frequency of occurrence is very high due to inherent problems of large classes.

(iii) The necessity and the need of these strategies is of prime importance for learners in large class situation.

(iv) They are highly relevant to large class situation.

My findings on behavior in large classes are in conformity with the findings of research on learner strategies in second language learning i.e. the learner behavior identified in this study also appear to fall under well-defined classification system of Met, Cognitive and Social affective strategies (Oxford,1993). Some of these behaviors which could be termed as Metacognitive are strategies such as: seeking involvement, seeking attention, paying attention etc. The cognitive strategies they seem to be using are reflected in note-taking, questioning, responding etc. Their behavior such as co-operating with peers, dominating in the classroom proceedings, seat location strategies etc. can be termed as socio-affective strategies.

3.1 Implications of the Study

The conclusions arrived at during this study are based on the intensive observations made of one large class situation. However, the situation observed is representative in various ways. Classes of this kind exist in several schools and colleges in India and the studies which have been carried out on this subject earlier (Singh,1990; Usha Prasad, 1992) bear this out. Therefore, the findings of this study and its conclusions can be extended to draw some implications and give recommendations for pedagogical action.

Based on the current literature in language learning and language teaching, it can be said that one of the main aims in a language learning classroom should be to provide the optimal conditions for language learning. Language classroom should be interactive in nature and provide opportunities to learners to interact in the class. Attempts should also be made to create conditions which are conducive to language learning. Learners should feel motivated, relaxed, and tension-free and they should receive a great deal of encouragement from the teacher.

Following this argument, it can be said that language classes should not be large. Large classes do not provide conditions which are suitable for language learning. They give rise to problems of management and control for the teacher, and affect interaction in the classroom. However, large classes are also inevitable. In the context of growing population of learners and the accompanying shortage of resources, the recommendation that there should be no large classes cannot be carried out.

Therefore, some suggestions to teach effectively in large classes are presented below:

i. Institutions which have large classes should attempt to provide appropriate infra-structure facilities. At least a classroom sufficiently large in size with good acoustics and a large sized blackboard should be provided. The furniture should be flexible so that the teacher can arrange and change it the way s/he likes.

ii. The time-table for English Classes should be drawn up in such a way that besides general sessions (often called lecture classes) there are also tutorial/discussions classes where the teacher can meet the students in small groups and cater to individual needs and problems. Such sessions can also be utilized for carrying out interactive activities giving/checking written work.

iii. For large classes, which are quite common at the Intermediate/ Undergraduate level, teaching materials should be specially written or attempts should be made to supplement the materials. The teaching materials should be of the kind which promote independent study and self-learning. This would help the teachers as they can then assign pre-class or post-class work to students. Students would also welcome this as these materials would help them to study on their own.

iv. Teachers teaching in large classes should change their style of teaching. They should understand that large classes require a different set of abilities. Lock - step methods of instruction are most unsuitable in language classes, especially in large English classes. They have to explore ways of making their classes interactive. The lecture method is unsuitable for language learning. Presentation sessions followed by buzz group or practice activity are to be preferred. Group-work is an excellent idea for large classes.

Teachers need to develop good managerial skills for handling large classes. Projecting one's voice appropriately, controlling large groups, handling responses in a large class, etc. are some of the important skills.

Teachers also need to develop appropriate attitudes for teaching large classes. They should recognize that large classes are inevitable and the problems they encounter have to be handled well. They should realize the limitations of large classes and therefore, should be ready to try out new techniques (such as group work) and also innovate if the situation demands.

v. Teachers teaching in large classes need special training. In-service courses which deal specifically with issues of handling large classes should be organized for teachers.

vi. Students who study in large classes also require 'training'. For students who encounter large classes in college after studying in similar classes in school, special orientation classes should be held. They should be given training in developing the skills of listening and note-taking. Students should also be trained in aspects such as how to supplement the instruction they receive in college. Methods of self-study should be taught to them and they should be encouraged to become independent learners. Specially the techniques for coping with the problems of large class (which were noticed in this study) should be developed amongst the learners. In this context, they should be helped to develop appropriate metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies.

3.2 Suggestions for Further Research

The research carried out in this study is limited in several ways. Only one large class was examined extensively for a period of time and only some students of this class were interviewed for the purpose of the study. It should be possible to carry out such studies in other contexts as well. By doing this, we could examine the findings of this study and also confirm them. On the basis of findings similarly in nature, one can make better generalizations.

Learner behaviour in large classes is an area which has not been explored much in spite of the recent interest in researching large classes (Lancaster-Leeds project, 1989). There is a strong need to do studies on specific learner problems in large classes: the listening strategies they require, the interactional skills which they need to develop and also the study habits/skills which they nein order to cope with the constraints. Theoretical research in areas such as language learning processes in large classes, interactional patterns in large classes, feedback strategies in large classes, evaluation in large classes etc. also needs to be carried out. However, the focus of such research should not be merely on providing information. The insights provided by such research should enable us to carry out instruction effectively in large classes and also help us in equipping learners with the skills of language learning in large classes.

References

Allwright, R.L. (1984): Why don't learners learn what teachers teach-the interaction hypothesis. In M. Singleton and D.G. Little (eds.), Language learning in formal and informal contexts. *IRAL* PP3-18.

Alwright, R.L. (1989): How important are lessons, anyway? Lancaster-Leeds language teaching on large classes project. Project report No. 12.

Bialystok, E. (1978): A theoretical model of second language learning. *Language Learning* 28:69-83.

Bialystok, E. (1981): The role of conscious strategies in second language proficiency. *Modern Language Journal* 65:24-35.

Bialystok, E., M. Frohlich, and J. Howard. (1978): *The teaching and learning of French as a second language in two distinct learning settings.* Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Breen, M. and C.N. Candlin. (1980): The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. *Applied Linguistics* 1:89-112.

Carver, D. (1984): Plans, learner strategies, and self- direction in language learning. *System* 12:123-133.

Cochen, A.D.. (1990): *Language learning: Insights for learners, teachers, and researchers.* New York: Newbury House.

Coleman, H. (1989): The study of large classes. Project report No.2. Lancaster – Leeds Overseas Education Unit, University of Leeds, Leeds.

Davies, I.K. (1971): *The management of learning.* New York: McGrawHill.

Dickinson, L.(1987): *Self instruction in language learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ehrman, M.E. and R.L. Oxford. (1989): Effects of sex differences, career choice, and psychological type on adult language learning strategies. *Modern Language Journal* 73:1-13.

Ellis, R. (1986): *Understanding second language acquisition: Learning in the classroom.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ely, C. (1989): Tolerance of ambiguity and use of second language learning strategies. *Foreign Language Annals* 22:437-445.

Forrester, J. (1968): *Teaching without lecturing.* London: Oxford University.

Glass, G.V., L.S. Cahar, M.L. Smith, and N.N. Filby. (1982): *School class size: Research and policy.* Sage

Hubbard, P., H. Jones, B. Thornton, and R. Wheeler. (1983): *A training course for TEFL.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Khan, Mohammad Athar, (1995): Learner Behaviour in Large ESL classes. M.Phil Dissertation, CIEFL, Hyderabad, India.

Lindbloom, D. (1970): *Class size as it affects instructional procedures and educational outcomes.* Minneapolis: Educational Research and Development Council of Metropolitan Area, Inc.

Lindbloom, D. (1977): 'Class size' is it an effective or relevant variable? In S. Goodman (ed.), *Handbook of contemporary education.* New York: R.R.Boroker.

Long, M.H. (1983): Does second language instruction make a difference ? *TESOL Quarterly* 17:359-382.

Long, M.H. (1983): Training the second language teacher as a classroom researcher. In. J.E. Altatis, H.H. Stern, and P. Strevens (eds.), Applied Linguistics and the preparation of second language teachers: Towards a rationale *GURT* '83. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Naiman, N. M. Frolich, and A. Todesco (1975): The good second language learner. *TESL Talk* 6:58-75.

Nolasco, R. and L. Arthur. (1988): *Large Classes.* London: Mcmillan.

O'Malley, J.M and A Chamot. (1990): *Learning strategies in second language acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R. (1986): *Second language learning strategies: Current research and implications for practice.* Los Angeles. Centre for Language Education and Research, University of California, L.A.

Oxford, R. (1989): *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know.* New York: Newbury House.

Richards, J.C. and T.S. Rodgers. (1986): *Approaches and methods in language teachings: A description and analysis.* Cambridge: Cambride University Press.

Rubin, J. (1975): What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly* 9:41-51.

Seliger, H.W. and M.H. Longs, (eds.), (1983): *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Singh, R. (1990): Towards an integrated methodology for teaching English in large classes at the undergraduate level. M.Litt. dissertation, CIEFL, Hyderabad., India.

Stern, H.H. (1983): *Fundamental concepts of language teaching.* Oxford:Oxford University Press.

Tarone, E. (1977): Conscious communication strategies in interlanguage: A progress report. In H.D. Brown, C.A. Yorio, and R. Crymes (eds.), *On TESOL '77: Teaching and learning ESL.* Washing, D.C.: TESOL.

Tarone, E. (1983): Some thoughts on the notion of "communication strategy." In C. Faerch and G. Kasper (eds.), *Strategies in interlanguage communication.* London: Longman.

Usha Prasad, P. (1992): Classroom communication in English classes of different sizes. M.Phil dissertation, CIEFL, Hyderabad, India.

Producing Culturally Sensitive Materials for Gulf Arab Students

LISA BARLOW, United Arab Emirates University
JEAN FLOYD, Higher Colleges of Technology

1.0 Introduction

> *"The educated are the best asset of any advanced nation . . .*
> *and a barometer of the progress of a people and nations."*
> *Sheikh Zayed 1998*

The culture of the Arabian Gulf is unique. It is not as readily transparent as other Arab countries' cultures. Instead, it is submerged behind a veil of modernity. Yet, the modernity is only surface level, and so to expose Gulf Arab students to western-commercial EFL materials will often distract the student from the language-learning objective and, possibly, build barriers between the student and instructor or student and program. To prevent these dilemmas came the necessity of producing in-house materials that are culturally sensitive, yet interesting and applicable for Gulf Arab students. In addition, they should be as valid and engaging as commercial texts, illustrations and videos.

When producing these culturally sensitive materials, the obvious subjects that need to be avoided are religion, sex, politics and music. In addition, to be culturally sensitive, a materials writer must be aware that written, visual and video materials need to reflect an awareness of tribal and family alliances, an intercultural hierarchy, socially appropriate language, and lastly, political and social tensions which are specific to the Arabian Gulf.

This paper will address the pitfalls and successes of writing culturally sensitive materials for two institutions of higher learning in the United Arab Emirates. In addition, results of a survey given to students and instructors of UAE University and Higher Colleges of Technology will be reported.

2.0 The BUEC and Censorship

> "Course design and materials must be responsive to the Islamic culture within which we work." *BUEC Framework for Action 1997*

> *"It is impossible to study education in any Islamic nation without considering the close relationship between religion and education because the two are inseparable." Al-Shawan 1985*

When the Basic University Education Center, now known as Undergraduate Requirements Unit (UGRU) began in 1990 at United Arab Emirates University, it was programmed to be an innovative learning environment "western style". While the UAE society viewed it as an additional support to modern education, another strata of the society was hesitant to support its methodology and faculty because it was uniquely western. Thus, curriculum and materials were subjected to a rigid critique. To address these concerns, the policy of in-house production of course materials was implemented. In the English Unit, this meant that the primary text of each level of English would be produced by existing teaching staff.

Commercially prepared texts and supplementary materials for the Self-Access Center, Reading Room and library were passed through a censorship committee who deleted lines, pages, photos and illustrations that were considered inappropriate for UAE students. Items to be censored were topics of religion, sex, politics, drinking, dating, and music.

Gradually, as the English teaching staff acclimatized to the Gulf society, a more reflective attitude toward materials and curriculum emerged. Instead of a blanket avoidance of certain topics because of references to censored topics, a transition took place. BUEC materials became deluged with *culturally appropriate* topics such as *How to Make Arabic Coffee, How to Make Henna, Bullfights in Fujairah, Wilfred Thieseger, Ibn Battuta, the desert, the bedu* and *falconry*. By the time the student reached the last level of English, he/she could produce a credible paragraph on any one of these subjects. The curriculum had reverted to teaching a culture its own culture- but in English. There are, of course, credible studies that support such a policy (Kramsch 1993, Campbell 1983, Abuhamdia 1984 and Buckton 1983); however, overkill can quickly mar its effective usage. Additionally, the studies promoting such a curriculum are usually implementing it in an effort to deal with culture shock of ESL students in the US, not EFL students studying in their own countries.

Fortunately, more recent UGRU materials production reflects an adaptation and conversion to the society in which we teach. Materials writers are finding that it is possible to produce engaging culturally sensitive course materials for UAE students. To succeed in this endeavor they are recognizing the four criteria outlined below.

3.0 The Four Criteria

3.1 Tribal and Family Alliances

> *"For many cases colonialism has assumed a guise of political innocence, apparently leaving a region and handing political control over to the inhabitants while actually re-establishing a covert economic colonialism. The societies of the Gulf were first affected by direct, and subsequently indirect, colonialism and they continue to suffer from various forms of the later." Rumaihi 1986*

The Gulf culture is a unique one. It is a culture which is undergoing modern development at a rapid pace. Imaginary borderlines have been drawn and redrawn by colonial powers with little or no acknowledgement of tribal groupings. However, whatever the guise of the establishment of these borders, and the ensuing conflicts it has caused, and outward changes on the society itself, there is one constant: the dominance of tribal and family alliances on Gulf society.

For example, in Kuwait, where there is an elected parliament, voting districts have been drawn and redrawn each election so that candidates can successfully receive the majority of votes from their tribe and from other tribes allied with their own (Barlow, 1985). In the UAE, tribal adherence is even stronger. Tribes agree upon marriage contracts, and tribal elders negotiate land and water disputes. In Oman, sheiks or heads of tribes, receive a government stipend for being a figurehead decision-maker and placater for their tribe.

How can materials writers address this issue? If tribal names are used in production of materials or realia is supplemented, some consideration must be taken into the context of which tribal names are used. As an example, in a placement exam produced for the UAE University Distant Learning Program was the following comparison question:

The Shamsee tribe is ___________ than the Mansoori tribe. (large)

To the average material writer this question looks straightforward. Yet, in fact, the exam was given to students living in the Merfa and the surrounding areas. The majority of which belong to the Al Manssori tribe. For the past 100 or more years the Al Mansoori and Al Shamsee tribes have been in conflict. This question was not a problem at other centers in the UAE, but had an impact on students in Merfa. Thus, the students were thrown off task and exam validity was put into question.

3.2 Inter and Intracultural Hierarchies

> *"In the last days of that bitter winter, without warning, the American who had left them long months before returned with four others and some of the emir's men. Miteb had nicknamed him Nahs (Disaster) while others called him Ghorab (The Crow), but this time he had a new name Abdullah…Within days everything in the wadi changed- men, animals and nature- for no sooner had the American, his friends and their companions been settled in than a large number of other people arrived. No one had ever dreamed such people existed: one was short and obese with red hair and another was tall enough to pick dates from the trees. Yet another was a s black as the night, and there were more- blond and redheaded. They had blue eyes and bodies fat as slaughtered sheep, and their faces inspired curiosity and fear. They came on camelback and horseback, dragging behind them numberless crates, bundles and pitched the tents a short distance from the brook. It happened as quickly as in a dream. Miteb al-Hathal did not immediately comprehend what had happened because he had been in the garden, but he paled and trembled when he heard what the others had to tell him, and quick as a foolish he hurried over to Ibn Rashed's encampment to find out what had happened in Wadi al-Uyoun… People long remembered the moment he arrived shaking like a leaf and glancing about him like a wolf. When he caught sight of the newly built camp, he could not stop cursing. He wanted to destroy it utterly, but the people prevented him. Later on many of them would say, "Miteb al-Hathal was right… yes, he was right!"*
>
> *Abdel Rahman Munif 1987*

With the discovery of oil and the importation of foreign technicians and labor. The societies of the Gulf countries have gone through tremendous change. When a society goes through such a rapid and all encompassing change, certain attitudes towards outside cultures naturally emerge. Discussions of the social, moral, psychological and political problems of expatriates and their effects on the social economic and political development of gulf nations became rampant. Today there is an ever-growing dichotomy between the indigenous Gulf populations and the expatriate workers who outnumber them. The cultures of the indigenous Gulf and expatriate populations rarely merge, fostering even more cultural misunderstandings, which can eventually transform into discrimination. Perhaps such attitudinal changes are most readily seen in the hierarchy of the workforce.

How can these attitudes be deflected in course materials? Certainly not by ignoring them. Instead an attempt needs to be made to not impose western values and mores on materials. As an example, traditionally in all Gulf states the guards of the sheiks were Bedouin. This was a job held in reverence by the society for it was deemed that the Bedouin were not only brave and strong, but also trustful in the protection of the rulers. This historical employment status has remained today. Not only that, but in the UAE the police departments are the number one employer of Emirati men. When UAE students were faced with a pre-reading chart, text and post-reading chart on careers in the UAE, the pre-reading answers seldom correlated with the post-reading answers (see appendix). The assumed answers to the pre-reading chart for the category of policeman were: education – secondary school, salary – low, and job – difficult. These assumptions did not take into account once again that the police departments employ a large majority of Emirati men. Thus, a majority of the student's fathers, brothers, husbands and often themselves are working for the police department. They do not see the salary as low. In fact, depending on rank and service, the salary range can be quite high- instead of *He doesn't get a big salary, but his job is very important*. Not only does the text claim the salary is low, moreover *but his job is very important* comes across as almost apologetic for the low salary, a meaning certainly not intended by materials writers, yet often ascertained by students. Additionally, students do not view the job as requiring only a secondary school education. In fact, the majority of policemen are graduates of UAE police schools and colleges or are presently enrolled at UAE University.

3.3 Socially Appropriate Language

> *The mistress of the tent is um 'ayal (mother of the children) to her husband or others, or she may be addressed as Um Sa'ud, Um Hessa, etc. She id rarely called by her own personal name. A guest should certainly refer to her as mother of so and so if he were on sufficiently good terms to ask after his host's wife at all. Questions of marriageable aged daughters are never asked especially of a male guest." Dicksen 1949*

The division between teaching language and culture is always a fuzzy one. Errors in the social propriety of language within the Gulf culture are often even harder to see. Yet it is important to remember that there are emotional associations that cultures assign to certain words and phrases. To subject students to materials that elicit emotions not relevant to the exercise takes the student off task. In previous UGRU English texts, students are taken through a series of exercises and readings on family, at the end of which they are asked to produce a family tree and describe members of the family. Next, the student is to ask a partner about his/her own family tree and family descriptions. In a class composed of female teacher and female students this poses no real dilemma. But in a class of male teacher and male students the opposite is true. Within the Gulf culture, a man does not talk about his mother, sisters or wife with another man. This is taboo. To even suggest that he must also describe them physically is doubly taboo. In this case, western attitudes of openness when talking about family overrode the cultural stigma associated with it in Gulf society.

3.4 Political and Social Tensions

> *"The seven emirates of the UAE have not all been equally blessed. Therefore, real economic growth depends on projects funded by the national government." Sheikha Hamdan bin Rashid al Maktoum 1996*

Within, the seven emirates lie divergent government attitudes and a variety of racial subgroupings. Each emirate has its own sheik who determines financial and fiscal policies for his emirate. These policies are determined, to a large extent, by the economic realities existing within each emirate. Thus, while the Abu Dhabi emirate has a large income from oil development, and Dubai has revenue from both oil and its duty free port, emirates such as Ajman and Fujairah are not as fortunate. Although these emirates receive substantial revenue from the national budget, they do not have big independent revenues for development of their own infrastructures.

This observation can relate directly to description assignments. While each emirate may be unequal in economic monies, it is not in student allegiance. Thus, when students are prompted to write a description of their emirate and present it to the class, a sometimes-lively competition and debate ensues. While Dubai has money to build beautiful roads, high rise buildings, and mega shopping centers, Um Al Quwaiin and Ajman can be viewed as underdeveloped because of a lesser income and endowment from the national government.

Additionally, in comparing one emirate to another, differing social tensions can arise. For example, the society has informally split itself into varying categories such as Bedowee (Bedouin), Hatharee (city folk), Jabalee (mountain folk), Ajamee (Arab tribes originating in Iran) and Samachee (people who traditionally made their living from the sea- pearling or fishing). These subgroupings often come into play again when describing the people of individual emirates. There are often certain negative associations that are placed on each subgrouping, though while subtle, are often offensive to individual students within the class. In comparing or describing emirates, students have at times unjustly associated social problems with the subgrouping living in that emirate.

Lastly, often course material can unintentionally cause uproar on even the most innocent social issues. One such example was in a comparison test question.

Kuwait has a __________ football team than the UAE. (strong)

Once again, the writer did not associate the question with the recent World Cup playoffs when Kuwait beat UAE to go on to the finals. Because soccer is the number one sport here, reactions to such a statement caused an emotional upset that echoed throughout the classroom. Again, the social realities are not so readily apparent in the Gulf as they seem.

4.0 The Questionnaire

In an attempt to examine the attitudes of our students a questionnaire was written aimed to assess which topics tertiary level students of EFL found too sensitive in reading texts, listening scripts, writing tasks, and discussions. Forty possible topics were listed on the survey and students were asked to circle "Yes" if they found the topic "comfortable" and "No" if they found the topic "uncomfortable". In March 1998, instructors at the Women's campus of the UAE University in Al Ain and 5 instructors at the Women's campus of the Higher College of Technology in Al Ain volunteered to distribute the survey to their first year EFL classes. In addition, 3 instructors at the Women's campus of the Higher College of Technology in Al Ain volunteered to distribute the survey to their third year content classes (Level 4, English medium classes). Although the sample size for this group was small, it provided a window into possible attitude changes and desensitization to topics over time as students advanced. A total of 114 first-year students and 21 third-year students were surveyed.

Another survey was prepared using the same format but aimed at instructors to see how accurately instructors could predict which topics were sensitive to their students and how sensitive they thought their students might be to those topics. Twenty-four EFL instructors from the Women's campus of the UAE University volunteered to fill out the survey for instructors. Five first-year EFL and other content area instructors and 10 third-year EFL and other content area instructors volunteered from the Women's campus of the Higher College of Technology in Al Ain. A total of 39 instructors participated in the survey.

5.0 Discussion

The "No" responses ("uncomfortable" responses) were tallied for each level at each institution separately. Entry level (first-year) students did not differ significantly between the two institutions in their responses to the survey. Therefore, these entry students were lumped together and compared to the advanced, third-year students where significant differences were evident. (See the survey response attached.) The number of "No" responses was divided by the number of students who actually responded to each item to achieve a percent score. (Some items were skipped by some students- perhaps due to difficulty in interpreting the topic.) Instructor responses are included as well, in percent scores.

In general, the entry (first-year) students were more uncomfortable with topics than the advanced (third-year) students according to this sample. This indicates that some desensitization occurs as students advance in their tertiary programs. Furthermore, 90% of the advanced students claim that they can handle these topics better than they could when they entered the college. Interestingly, 85% of the advanced students do not believe that the first-year students can handle these topics as well as they can.

It must be noted that the sample size for the advanced students is quite small and therefore the results cannot be claimed to be a reliable indicator of all advanced students at both institutions. However, the population surveyed was the entire group (save a couple of students who were absent on the survey day) of third year students at Al Ain Women's College of Higher Technology, so the data is accurate for that institution.

It must also be said that the survey design was too weak to distinguish between "discomfort" and "disinterest" regarding a topic. Claiming the "sensitive" topics to be "culturally taboo" is therefore insupportable. However, they are "sensitive" in that students prefer not to deal with them for whatever reason: disinterest, discomfort, irrelevance, clash with personal or societal values, clash with traditions or culture, or even negative associations or memories. This may explain the high level of sensitivity to such topics as dogs and snakes.

For the most part, instructors were able to predict the sensitivity levels of their students quite accurately. In some cases though, they underestimated how their students would respond and in other cases they overestimated how their students would respond. (See the attached tables.) These areas would be of particular interest to faculty new to the Gulf. The level of the students must be considered when evaluating materials for cultural sensitivity. Entry level students tend to be more sensitive to controversial topics while advanced students are only sensitive to a few topics (see the bolded topics on the "descending order" attachment). Without a doubt the gender of the instructor is a variable. Students may feel comfortable dealing with a topic with an instructor of the same gender, but not with an instructor of the opposite gender. Students may also respond differently depending on the instructor's degree of comfort in dealing with a controversial topic. An instructor who is a risk-taker and feels comfortable dealing with controversial topics may be modeling behavior to students that a non-risk-taking instructor would not. Other variables could be the students' backgrounds and experience: whether they live in a cosmopolitan area or a remote village, experience with foreigners, travel, world knowledge, liberal or conservative stances, level of comfort with risk, the need to converse on such a topic for an exam and innumerable others.

6.0 Conclusions

Despite the limitations of the 1) survey design, 2) the small, volunteer sample and 3) the numerous variables, this survey does indicate that there is some desensitization to controversial topics which occurs as students advance through their tertiary programs. Given this change, should instructors or administrators censor or avoid sensitive topics? We must respect the tertiary students' right to choose which topics they are ready to discuss and which they are not. If instructors or administrators take it in their hands to make these choices for the students, the students may not appreciate our efforts to "protect" them. We may deprive them of the safe environment in which they can work through their feelings about these issues. Students at the tertiary level must be able to function in the "global village" by the time they graduate.

The classroom should provide a self-monitoring environment where initially the only criticism comes from a student's peers. Then, as students become more confident in their abilities to cope with these topics and other issues, they can test themselves outside the classroom in an ever-expanding circle of people involved in such dialogues. As instructors we do not teach the views or values the students adopt, but allow them to form their own opinions, express them with confidence, listen respectfully to opposing views and realize that not all controversies can be resolved.

Thus, developing culturally sensitive materials in the Gulf requires not only a need to reflect an awareness of tribal and family alliances, an intercultural hierarchy, socially appropriate language, and political and social tensions which are specific to the Arabian Gulf. The results of the questionnaire also suggest the need and the ability to expand the material presented in a safe environment in which students can explore their feelings about sensitive issues and begin to express their views with confidence.

"UNCOMFORTABLE" TOPICS IN DESCENDING ORDER

Based on responses from 114 (converted to %) **1st year students** in tertiary education in Al Ain.

66% **Dogs and other pets**
57% **Bad pictures you might find on the internet**
56% Death and Dying
55% Birth Control Drugs
54% Population control policies in the world
52% Poverty and starvation in the world
51% **Belly Dancing**
51% Alcohol and the problems it causes at home
50% Muslim violence against other Muslims (i.e. Algeria)
50% **Snakes and dangerous desert animals**
46% Ghosts
45% Vampires
45% Dating and man/woman relationships on TV
45% Physically handicapped people
45% Mentally handicapped people
44% Wars in the world
43% Violence on TV
41% Violence in the home (men who hit their wives or children)
41% AIDS and other diseases
40% Discrimination
40% Birth Defects
40% Traditional Dances
39% Traditions in other countries
39% Alcohol and the problems is causes at work
38% Illegal drugs and the effects on society
38% **Parts of the body**
38% Car accidents in the UAE
37% Romance books
36% Crime and violence in the world
34% Other family groups (tribes) in the UAE
32% Homeless people
30% Foreign workers in the UAE
30% Other religions in the world
29% Your family group (tribe) in the UAE
26% Cosmetics and make-up
20% Tourists
17% How to protect yourself from crime
17% Religion in the UAE
13% The changing role of women in society
12% Wedding traditions in other countries

Topics highlighted in **bold** are topics which upper level students still find "uncomfortable".

As a student (over the age of 18) in higher education (HCT or UAE University), would you feel comfortable discussing, reading, listening to, or writing about these topics?

PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO ANSWERED "NO"

TOPIC	INSTRUCTORS N= 39	FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS N= 114	THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS N= 21
parts of the body	44	38	38
bad pictures you might find on the internet	74	57	52
crime and violence in the world	15	36	0
illegal drugs and the effects on society	15	38	0
homeless people	15	32	0
alcohol and the problems it causes at work	51	39	5
alcohol and the problems it causes at home	64	51	10
the changing role of women in society	5	13	0
religion in the UAE	15	17	14
other religions in the world	38	30	5
vampires	46	45	14
ghosts	41	46	10
how to protect yourself from crime	13	17	0
wedding traditions in other countries	5	12	5
cosmetics and make-up	10	26	14

traditional dances	8	40	19
belly dancing	46	51	38
tourists	3	20	0
foreign workers in the UAE	3	30	5
traditions in other countries	3	39	0
your family group (tribe) in the UAE	10	29	14
other family groups (tribes) in the UAE	13	34	14
car accidents in the UAE	10	38	10
AIDS and other diseases	38	41	14
wars in the world	15	44	14
poverty and starvation in the world	10	52	10
dying and death	41	56	19
violence in the home (men who hit their wives or children)	59	41	5
Muslim violence against other Muslims	56	50	14
population control policies in the world	41	54	14
birth control drugs	62	55	19
birth defects	28	40	24
physically handicapped people	21	45	10
mentally handicapped people	26	45	19
violence on TV	10	43	14
dating and man/woman	72	45	24

relationships on TV			
dogs and other pets	36	66	38
snakes and dangerous desert animals	0	50	38
romance books	36	37	19
discrimination (not treating other people as equals)	15	40	5

TOPICS WHICH INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS RATED DIFFERENTLY

39 Instructors were asked which topics they felt students would find "uncomfortable".

TOPIC	INSTRUCTORS - %	ENTRY STUDENTS- %
traditional dances	8	40
traditions in other countries	3	39
car accidents in the UAE	10	38
poverty and starvation in the world	10	52
dating and man/woman relationships on TV	72	45
snakes and dangerous desert animals	0	50
violence on TV	10	43

TOPIC	INSTRUCTORS - %	ADVANCED STUDENTS - %
Alcohol and the problems it causes at work	51	5
Alcohol and the problems it causes at home	64	10
Other religions in the world	38	5
AIDS and other diseases	38	14

Violence in the home	59	5
Dating and man/woman relationships on TV	72	24
birth control drugs	62	19

References

Abuhamdia, Zakaria A. (1984). "English Departments at Arab Universities: Toward a Planning-basaed Model" in *Language Problems and Language Planning* 8: 1, 21-31.

Al Maktoum, Sheikha Hamdan bin Rashid. (1996). Gulf News supplement on the 1996 UAE National Day silver Jubilee Special.

Al Nahyan, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan. (1996). Gulf News supplement on the 1996 UAE National Day Silver Jubilee Special.

Al Shawan. (1985).

Barlow, Lisa. (1985). Political and Social Dimensions of Kuwaiti Shi'ites. MA Thesis, University of Chicago.

Buckton, Rosalind J. (1983). "Literature as Reality: An Approach to Western Literature for Arab Students" in *British Journal of Language Teaching* 21: 2, 86-92.

Campbell, Clifton P. (1983). International Communication: with special attention to the English language capabilities of Saudi Arab students. Paper presented at the Seminar on Technology Transfer, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1983.

Dickenson, H. R. P. (1949). *The Arab of the Desert*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London.

Kramsch, Claire. (1993). "Language Study as Border Study: Experiencing Difference" in *European Journal of Education* 28: 3, 349-358.

Lyons, Joe. (1994). Framework for Action. BUEC English Program, UAE University.

Munif, Abdulrahman. (1989). *Cities of Salt*. Vintage International, Random House, New York.

Rumaihi, Mohammed. (1986). *Beyond Oil: Unity and Development in the Gulf*. Routledge Press: London.

ESP in the Arab World: A Colloquium

Compiled and edited by: KAREN ASENAVAGE
United Arab Emirates University

The text is a composite of the efforts of:

Janet Miller
USIS, Jordan
Tony Parsons, Gerald Selous, Saleh Al-Busaidi, Faiza Al-Hosni, Hamed Al-Malki and Reema Al-Zadjali
Sultan Qaboos University, Oman
Mark Algren and Ahmed Motola
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Robert Hunkin, Stephen Roach and Abdulrahman Al-Masri
United Arab Emirates University, United Arab Emirates
Abdul-Rahim K. Al-Salwi, *Sana'a University, Yemen*
Roger Laubengayer, *ELS Language Centers, United States*
Sada Daoud, *University of Damascus, Syria*

The need for English for Specific Purposes is growing and responding to the rapidly changing technological, industrial, political and economic climate. This situation calls for nationals in Arab countries who can use English effectively in all of these arenas, and institutions that can successfully prepare them. In order to meet the challenge, the form and function of English for Specific Purposes in the Arab world is rapidly evolving and changing. It requires cooperation between academic/language institutions, governing bodies, and technological, financial and industrial companies in the development of courses with training to cater for specific client needs. This colloquium has been designed as a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences for the better understanding of ESP in the Arab world. It is important to note that the speakers represent six Arab countries, each of which is a separate entity with its own specific governmental, educational and cultural characteristics that ultimately affect the nature of ESP in that country.

ESP is not new to the Arab world. In each country represented in this presentation, initial ESP efforts were begun in the early 1980's. In many cases, western expatriate government organizations assisted in developing language centers, which offered courses that met the specific language needs of the community and country primarily in business, science and technology. In time, these were absorbed by larger institutions and are now departments within the national universities or with specific faculty departments of the universities. Today, ESP is taught in tertiary institutions, national military and medical schools, expatriate government centers, private language academies and in private corporations. As countries become more cosmopolitan, their need for specific English language skills increases and programs now focus more upon preparing nationals for the workplace in various areas but increasingly in business, banking and Internet use. These institutions, organizations and programs, while trying to meet the need for ESP, uncover larger more pressing problems which require specialized English language teaching experience, planning and training. The development of ESP in the countries represented shows similar influences, but each is at a different stage with differing needs. A brief review of the history, current status of ESP and direction for the future of ESP in each country can provide valuable insight for ESP educators, materials writers and textbook publishers, government organizations and private companies who hope to share in the tremendous growth of this region.

ESP in Jordan

The mid-eighties saw the rise of ESP programs at tertiary institutions in Jordan. The English Language Center at Yarmouk University in the north of Jordan pioneered an ESP Program based upon student needs and levels. Its experience mirrors that of other tertiary institutions. The first program at Yarmouk included courses in ESP for Science, Economics, Social Sciences and Humanities, journalism and academic English. Later these included ESP for Education, Law, Islamic Law and Engineering. In the beginning, the Yarmouk ESP program relied upon textbooks from the United States and the United Kingdom. Later, faculty members developed their own courses and materials which served as a model borrowed by other Universities. For example, Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) adopted the Yarmouk program in 1989.

In 1992, the Yarmouk program suffered a serious setback when English requirements were reduced from six credit hours to three. Then in 1995, it was decided that students would take general English. This decision was reversed in 1997-1998 and students now take six credit hours of English. The program is now a combination of general English and an ESP course for the students of Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and an ESP course for students of Science, Economics, Law and Engineering. A placement test has been introduced and those who pass are exempted from taking general English.

Since English is usually a required course in secondary schools and the first year or two of University, the United States Information Service staff offer consultation and ESP resource support for Journalism, Legal English, English for Parliamentarians, English and the Environment, Business English, Academic English and Internet English. To a lesser extent, Medical, Science and Technology and Engineering English is supported. Private language centers also offer ESP courses to local ministries, non-governmental organizations and businesses.

Three key issues affect ESP in Jordan. They are instability, unavailability of materials and lack of trained ESP instructors. The instability in ESP in Jordan arises from the administrators who are not language specialists. Administrators, as in any country, respond to those programs which prove to be fiscally more viable and usually do not consult departments concerned when making programming decisions. This has hindered the growth and development of ESP in Jordan especially in the area of materials development and teacher training for ESP instructors.

Jordanian tertiary institutions are once again starting to recognize the importance of ESP programs. Jordan University and Mu'tah University among others have begun to develop new ESP programs particularly in the fields of Business, Journalism, Tourism and Hotels. There is a new BA in ESP program offered at Jordan University of Science and Technology to train ESP teachers and meet the growing demand for them, but its impact is yet to be felt.

ESP in Yemen

As in Jordan, ESP in Yemen began in a Language Center run by Sana'a University in 1983. Curricula prior to this time were inconsistent having been imported from Egypt, Iraq, Syria and the UK. Today, students take English for their specific faculty 2 hours per week in Agriculture up to 10 hours per week in Medicine. However, insufficient English language training in primary and secondary schools, university open-door admission policies, shrinking budgets and lack of materials and culturally suitable textbooks have all contributed to ESP courses becoming little more than technical glossary introductions or replaced by General English courses.

Unlike in other Arab countries, the issue of language is still hotly debated and while government officials recognize the need for English as the "window on scientifically and technologically advanced parts of the world" (Abdul Ghani 1976), Yemeni students have seen little real use for English. However, with the growing impact of computers upon the Yemeni society, students are becoming interested in learning English in order to become part of the global network.

ESP in Oman

In 1986, Sultan Qaboos University was established with English-medium Colleges in Science, Medicine, Agriculture, and Engineering. From the outset, the intention was that the language courses should be seen as a supplement and parallel to the academic courses in which the students were enrolled, thus creating an "ideal" ESP situation. Teachers worked in close collaboration with the subject lecturers, attended classes/workshops/lab sessions and designed material to prepare students for their subject classes while at the same time developing their English language skills. However, it was soon realized that a period of preparatory English was needed. Students now complete an intensive English program for two semesters prior to beginning their subject areas. This includes general English and EAP-type skill preparation. While in the subject areas, students take 6 hours of English per week, which parallels subject courses. Curricula in these courses are modified versions of the prior ESP courses. The Medical faculty maintains the most thoroughly integrated ESP program at Sultan Qaboos.

The situation differs in other vocational and technical institutions throughout Oman. With the advent of Omanization and overseas studies, more and more students and job seekers are required to have an externally verified measure of their English language proficiency. The British Council is among these providers and offers 15 IELTS examinations per year. Other private sector schools offer some type of vocational or professional English courses. Industries which offer their own programs include the oil industry, military schools/training institutions, banks and other commercial organizations.

Many organizations in Oman, for example Sultan Qaboos University, function in English, and the Omanization of manpower is a recurrent theme in all training/educational/government organizations. Omanization requires English language skills. Although the general level of English in the community is good, with particular excellence in many government and private organizations, there is still a need to provide post-secondary English language courses to enable students to follow instruction or training in English or to operate in their chosen field in English. Another recent development in ESP is the extent to which British-based GNVQs (General National Vocational Qualifications) and NVQs are being taught through the medium of English. The latter are for full-time employees and trainees covering specific occupational areas and assessed in the workplace and do not require core skills. GNVQs are for full-time students covering broad occupational areas as preparation for employment or further training and require core skills in communication and IT.

Although there has been no attempt to define precisely what "ESP" means, it is clear that in Oman, the continuing expansion of education, training and the Omanization process will require parallel growth of English language training/teaching. This will be a combination of so-called "general" English as well as the kinds of English needed to meet the specified needs of a particular organization or training course. 1998 was declared "the Year of the Private Sector", and the government-supported initiative has had a strong impact on the growth of English teaching setting forth its own set of specific purposes.

Issues that arise in ESP programs center on the lack of materials. In particular, written materials, of the right kind, at the right level, are generally not available. In most places, there is an attempt to blend commercially produced general English courses with in-house materials of some kind. This often fails to satisfy everyone. In-house produced materials can be excellent, and with the increasing sophistication of DTP software can look as good as commercial material. However, there is inevitable duplication of effort and constant re-inventing of wheels. One solution may be to encourage local networking of those involved in production of materials to share problems and solutions and to combine efforts. The recent ESP conference in Bahrain was a successful step towards this end.

ESP in Saudi Arabia

There has been a long-standing influence of English stemming from the development of oil companies throughout Saudi Arabia. However, the late development of public education, with the first university established in the late 1950s, has resulted in the slow recognition of the need for English language proficiency in the Kingdom and is the reason why a major emphasis upon English has just recently come to the fore.

ESP today is necessary so that the Kingdom can conduct international business. English for international business purposes and vocational English for the transfer of technology from developed countries is vital. Students in many fields study general and sub-technical English and then field-specific English in tandem with vocation training usually conducted by English speaking technical trainers.

There is a great variety of ESP teaching taking place, most of which is conducted by governmental institutions, the military and private companies. ESP as EAP is taught at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) directed toward science and technology. Students complete a pre-university Intensive English program and undergraduate academic writing program with library research and term paper writing. Administrators in the English programs at KFUPM are being called upon to offer continuing education courses, short courses and consultations with various organizations to help guide, develop and teach courses. As in most Arab countries the need is for culturally appropriate materials at appropriate and often lower language levels.

This raises several pertinent issues similar to those of other Arab countries. There is a great need for culturally and vocationally appropriate ESP materials and there is a strong desire to maintain local customs and traditions and values without English-speaking cultural imperialism. Therefore, programs generally rely upon instructors to develop materials. These well-meaning teachers are not necessarily curriculum and materials writers. There is also a duplication of effort as many organizations develop their own materials. All of this causes development of inadequate materials, ineffective programs, increased staff turnover, changes in leadership, new focus and more new materials, all of which are extremely costly. There is a growing realization that small, in-house programs may not be effective so they are being outsourced by companies focusing more on their core business rather than English.

The future of ESP in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should grow as Saudization programs are implemented. Smaller organizations will out-source their costly English programs so that there may be a consolidation of language teaching programs. There is a strong and growing need for materials. As indicated these are not often effective when developed in-house, and teachers resort to illegal photocopying. However, Saudi Arabia is now a signatory to international copyright laws making the market for textbooks and publishers more commercially viable. There is a strong need for teacher training in ESP as the economy shrinks and the focus is on hiring local teachers. Unfortunately, Saudi teachers usually have English literature degrees rather than ESL and are not qualified to write ESL materials.

ESP in Syria

ESP in Syria, is found primarily at the ESP Center (ESPC) at Damascus University, the English Language Advisory Center at the University of Aleppo and the English Language Teaching Institute at the University of Tishreen in Latakia. A brief history of the ESP training program at Damascus University is a specific example that shows the impact of western expatriate organizations upon ESP programs in a country.

From 1980 to 1986, two experts were provided by the British government to work with two Syrian counterparts at the ESPC at Damascus University. In-service training came in the form of seminars and workshops for all the teachers of English. The main focus of the training was implementation of communicative methodology. Training was not compulsory, but attendance was satisfactory. A language lab and book were provided. The Syrian counterparts were also given scholarship grants to study for higher degrees. When British diplomatic relations were severed in 1986, the administration of the language center shifted to one of the Syrian counterparts.

From 1988 to 1992, ESP programs were American aided particularly through the efforts of USIA and the Fulbright program. Highlights of that involvement include the efforts of Dr. Lee Colman who did not impose American methods, but invited students to reflect upon methodology in order to examine its relevance to the Syrian context. She also involved the teachers in designing a new Ph.D course and taught it with them so that they were able to appreciate the context and problems involved. She also involved Center teachers in offering

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

workshops for colleagues at the undergraduate level. This as well as her mentoring style encouraged local teacher trainers to pursue higher degrees.

From 1992 until the present, the ESP center has seen additional aid and influence. European aid has come within the framework of the M.Ed. Campus program. Several of the Center teachers are presently being trained to become trainers with the aim towards establishing a graduate diploma in ESP that will prepare teachers for all Syrian universities. British support has come mainly in the form of scholarships for Center teachers to pursue higher degrees at British Universities. American support has been in short-term teacher training programs and conference grants. The Center is gradually moving toward a more self-reliant position motivated by the availability of the return of highly qualified teachers. However, the needs are now changing. Syrian English language teachers are isolated and need to develop support networks with colleagues throughout the world. Attendance at regional and international conferences is becoming more possible with TESOL Arabia, IATEFL and TESOL international. Internet networking could also help to break this isolation. However, both tend to be expensive and often beyond the means of Syrian English language teachers.

ESP in Syria has made significant progress and has trained national teacher trainers, but the need still exists for continuing support and professional development from expatriate government organizations in native English-speaking countries.

ESP in the United Arab Emirates

ESP takes various forms in the United Arab Emirates. It occurs in tertiary education, the private sector and the public government sector. As in Saudi Arabia, much of the importance of English has come from the development of the oil and related industries. The education system has only recently evolved producing students with a relatively low level of English proficiency.

As in other countries, ESP had its beginnings in the early 1980s at the UAE University at the Language Center. What was once a community-based language learning program run by the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences evolved, in 1995, into a program which meets the specific language needs of seven faculties: Humanities and Social Sciences, Education, Science, Business and Economics, Agriculture, Engineering and Architecture and Shariah and Law. Students complete or test out of a general English program and then take a specific ESP course. The ESP Unit meets the needs of each faculty with an ESP course developed through an intensive needs analysis of each Faculty and an Integration Program where English medium course instructors and programs and their students are supported through training, teaching, team-teaching, tutoring and short courses offered by the largely North American and British teaching staff. The ESP Unit at the University has also begun to offer community courses through the Community Services Department of the University in ESP including nursing and medicine, business and administrative services, TOEFL and other exam preparation. It also offers consultations to local ministries and schools. The ESP program at the UAE University has come full circle.

The Higher Colleges of Technology also offers a type of ESP in the form of English and training for employment in the public and private sector completely using English as a

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

medium of instruction. While Business English is the primary focus, students learn and use English in practical situations, including Education, Health Sciences and Technical Skills. The Higher Colleges of Technology also support CERT (the Center for Excellence in Research and Technology) which offers a variety of ESP courses for the community.

With permission recently granted by the Ministry of Higher Education, there is an increasing number of tertiary institutions opening and increased competition among the schools. This has encouraged higher quality programs. Many of these institutions offer some type of ESP course or will implement one in the next few years as the students enter their major fields. These schools include: American University Sharjah, Sharjah University, Zayed University, Dubai Technical University, American University in Sharjah, Dubai Medical College, Dubai Polytechnic College, Dubai Aviation College, Ajman University, Al Ain Community College and Al Bayan University.

Besides academic institutions, companies in the private sector offer general English and ESP courses. These companies include Dubai Aluminum (Dubal), Abu Dhabi Gas (ADGAS), Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Emirtes Airlines, and various hotel chains. In the public/government sector, general English and ESP courses are offered at the Civil Aviation College, Sheikh Zayed Military Cantonment, UAE Chamber of Commerce in each Emirate, the Ministry of Health/Nursing, Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Defense.

Because students leave secondary schools and graduate from the University with English skills that are often less than satisfactory for employment at the level at which they will work, private and expatriate government organizations have been established and expanded to meet the need and fill a niche in the English language course offerings. These include a variety of local institutions Emirates Banking and Technology Institute, English Language School International and ELS Language centers.

ELS Language Centers have recently opened several centers throughout the Emirates. A more in-depth look at the Abu Dhabi center as described by its Academic Coordinator Roger Laubengayer provides more insight into the ESP needs of Emiratis. Immediately upon opening the Abu Dhabi center, it was clear that the need for English proficiency was extreme and nearly every segment of the society needed English language training. All of the major companies require all official correspondence and communication to be conducted in English. Additionally, most of the governmental entities including the military, use substantial amounts of English in the workplace. It is safe to say that proficiency in English is a general requirement for nearly all positions.

ELS recognized that one segment of the population that was in desperate need of training were students who had dropped out of high school and were attempting to find work. Their lack of English made it very difficult for them to be trained even for most entry-level positions. Their incentive to work was only heightened when the Government passed a law that required all able-bodied men to either work or attend school. Easily the greatest difficulty of programs is the slow rate at which the vast majority of students progress. The students, who had already been labeled failures in their previous studies, had to be encouraged at every turn so as not to get discouraged and give up. Although it was not easy, students generally did develop to about a high-beginner level, the minimum needed for employment. However, this

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

took as many as 600 hours for some students. Other students who achieved intermediate fluency received cultural training and many pursued their English studies overseas.

Expatriate government organizations also maintain offices in the UAE and the British Council and Institute for Australian Studies offer courses, teacher training programs and training grants and scholarships. Training opportunities for English teachers are also offered by the tertiary institutions and a number of British and American higher degree granting programs which offer distance programs.

As Emiratization becomes more prominent, more language courses will be required. Also with the addition of more American-based curriculum at all educational levels, the TOEFL is becoming essential, as are TOEFL training courses. In fact, a TOEFL score of 500 will be required for all graduating students in the year 2000 where an English-medium curriculum is used. This boon in ESP course offerings is both positive and negative. Many schools and programs develop their own textbooks because student level is often much lower than that targeted in traditional American and British ELT textbooks. Since this is the case, ESP textbooks must also be developed to accommodate the generally low English skills of students/clients. However, there is also a fairly large base of non-western expatriates whose level of proficiency is higher than that of the national population. This combined with lower level national students poses a challenge for both program and curriculum developers. Fortunately, many of these have some training, but in-house development can prove costly and is affected by leadership and staffing and financial constraints.

English and ESP are essential in the United Arab Emirates, but there are many pressing needs to see its implementation. While English is a dominant means of communication, many nationals do not perceive the need for well-developed language skills. Clearly, in the near future, there is little to indicate a change in the status quo. Students will have to spend at least one year after secondary school working on their English skills regardless of what career path they choose. The government does recognize this need and has made some reforms in the national curriculum. For example, since 1994, all children receive English classes from grade 1. There has also been a stronger mandate to keep students in school until grade 12. This should have a positive long-term effect. Training of English teachers in methodology and curriculum design is essential and is being addressed by the Ministry of Education in each emirate and through the efforts of TESOL Arabia. In addition, appropriate curricula and programs that provide English support and training on an extended basis in academic, training and in the workplace must be developed. If nationals are to be truly employable, and if the country is to meet its demand for skilled workers that its incredible economic development demands, ESP must be provided.

Summary

Historically, ESP began with the support of British and American expatriate government organizations in many of the Arab countries with the exception of those who developed as a result of the oil industry. In all cases native English speakers were instrumental in the development of ESP programs and teachers training programs. However, as these Arab countries move towards establishing a national dominated workforce, there is an increasing need for trained national ESP instructors. Moreover, there is a need for improved networking

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

of ESP professionals in the Arab world through established professional development organizations such as TESOL, IATEFL and TESOL Arabia and through national or city-specific focus groups.

In all cases, curriculum and materials development is a severe hindrance to effective ESP programs. There are few ESP textbooks or materials developed which are both culture and level appropriate. This may result in in-house production by inexperienced staff which is time-consuming and costly and may not be well-developed. Since the publication of small numbers of a specific type of ESP textbook is not fiscally viable, institutions may want to consider hiring trained curriculum development/instructors to meet this need. Western teacher training institutions should also include more thorough preparation in materials and curriculum development and writing in their courses since not all ESP programs can use commercially published materials.

In all cases as well, students needed a significant number of hours of general English instruction before ESP courses could be effective. Even then, English support in the workplace or through their academic careers is necessary.

English has become the language of business and science, and ESP in the Arab world has come full circle. Much has been accomplished. But as these countries develop, moving towards more self-sufficient educational systems, there is a greater need for ESP training and support and the follow-up mechanisms that will enable them to take their countries into the next millenium.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE